

The Eversley Shakespeare

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

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THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

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EDITED
WITH INTRODUCTIONS AND NOTES

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London

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED

NEW YORK: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1900

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

SOLINUS, duke of Ephesus.

ÆGEON, a merchant of Syracuse.

ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus, \ twin brothers, and sons to Ægeon and

ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse, / Æmilia.

DROMIO of Ephesus, \ twin brothers, and attendants on the two

DROMIO of Syracuse, / Antipholuses.

BALTHAZAR, a merchant.

ANGELO, a goldsmith.

First Merchant, friend to Antipholus of Syracuse.

Second Merchant, to whom Angelo is a debtor.

PINCH, a schoolmaster.

ÆMILIA, wife to Ægeon, an abbess at Ephesus.

ADRIANA, wife to Antipholus of Ephesus.

LUCIANA, her sister.

LUCE, servant to Adriana.

A Courtezan.

Gaoler, Officers, and other Attendants.

SCENE : *Ephesus.*

DURATION OF ACTION

A single day, ending about 5 P.M.

INTRODUCTION

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS first appeared in the Folio of 1623, where it occupies the fifth place. Like *Love's Labour's Lost* it was mentioned among Shakespeare's comedies by Francis Meres in the *Palladis Tamia*, 1598. But it was undoubtedly composed several years before this, and there is no reason to suppose that, like *Love's Labour's Lost*, it underwent any revision. All its features of style, metre, characterisation, and structure point to the years 1589-91 as its date; and two explicit allusions confirm this view. Theobald first pointed out the reference in iii. 2. to the contemporary civil war in France. Dromio, describing the corpulent kitchen-maid to Antipholus, replies to the question in what part of her person he had found 'France,' in the words: 'In her forehead; armed and reverted, against her hair.' This is also applicable to the situation between 1589, when Henry III. appointed Henry IV. his successor, and 1593, when the civil war closed with Henry's actual recognition as King. The English expedition sent to his aid in 1591 marked the warm popular sympathy with his cause of which Shakespeare had already made use in *Love's Labour's Lost*; and the unflattering—in its more occult sense even ribald—allusion to France doubtless brought down the house. It is probable that a *Comedy of Errors* performed in 1594 'by the players' at Gray's Inn was Shakespeare's play. A *Historie of Error* (now lost) is recorded to have

Literary
History.

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existed at a much earlier date—1st January 1577; but the wits and scholars who dictated intellectual fashions at the Inns of Court were not likely, at this moment of unparalleled dramatic advance, to revive an old play of the last decade but one.

Sources. To an audience of this type, Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* would peculiarly appeal by its obvious relation to two well-known plays of Plautus. Of one of these, the *Menæchmi*, an English version was published in 1595 by 'W. W.,' i.e. probably William Warner. The other plays translated by Warner remained in MS. But Shakespeare certainly imitated also—in a highly original way—a scene from the *Amphitruo*; and it is no violent hypothesis that the sometime scholar of Stratford grammar-school could and did read both in Latin. Plautus' *Menæchmi* is an amusing piece, of moderate merit. The *Menæchmi* are two brothers, one of whom (originally Sosicles) after the loss of the other is called by his name, and on growing up goes in search of him. They are distinguished in the English translation as *Menæchmus* 'the traveller' (T.) and 'the citizen' (C.). The former has a servant *Messenio*. The scene is laid at *Epidamnus* (called in the English version *Epidamnium*, in the Folio Shakespeare *Epidamium*). *Menæchmus* C. arranges to dine with *Erotium*, a courtesan. *Menæchmus* T., who has just landed, is summoned to the dinner, and after eating it, is entrusted with a cloak which *Menæchmus* C. has purloined from his wife for *Erotium*, and a chain, her own property, to take to the dyer and the goldsmith. *Menæchmus* C.'s wife ('*Mulier*') abuses him for the loss of her cloak and sends him to claim it from *Erotium*. In the meantime she meets *Menæchmus* T. with the cloak on his shoulders. Recriminations ensue. She calls in her father ('*Senex*'), who mildly expostulates; *Menæchmus*

Introduction

swears his innocence, is charged with madness, feigns madness to scare them, and on their running off to fetch a physician, flies to his ship. Returning they meet Menæchmus C., who is only saved from forcible capture by the arrival of Menæchmus T.'s servant Messenio. In reward he promises Messenio his freedom. Menæchmus T. being 'reminded' of this promise angrily scouts it, but the dispute is interrupted by the appearance of Menæchmus C. and the 'errors' are cleared up.

In Shakespeare's hands this farcical plot lost nothing of its farcical character. He even heightened the extravagance of the primary supposition by doubling the pair of indistinguishable twins; but he worked out the comical consequences of the situation with far greater care than Plautus, touched its romantic possibilities with a lyrical ardour to which Plautus was wholly strange, and set it in a framework of tragedy of which the Plautine story contains no suggestion.

The central incident—the entertainment of the wrong Menæchmus at dinner—was immensely improved with the aid of the motive already referred to from Plautus' *Amphitruo*. Jupiter and Mercury there visit Alcmena's house in the disguise of her husband Amphitruo and his servant Sosia. After their departure the true Amphitruo and Sosia arrive. It may well be that this suggested the introduction of the Dromio twins, though Shakespeare gives still more piquancy to the idea by making Antipholus and Dromio of Ephesus arrive at the door while their counterparts of Syracuse are still within. This probably further suggested the substitution of the wife for the courtesan, as the hostess of Antipholus of Syracuse, Antipholus of Ephesus' visit to the courtesan being made, with admirable tact, a not unnatural act of vengeance for his apparent exclusion from his own house, instead of

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a gratuitous infidelity, as it is in Plautus. The wife herself and her sister are studied with a care and minuteness which the action certainly did not require. In the change from Plautus' 'Mulier,' who rails at her husband with only too good reason, to Shakespeare's Adriana, who torments him with doubts at bed and board, and is ready to die in despair at the loss of his love because he refuses to come home to dinner, we see the change from pragmatism to psychological drama, from the comedy of intrigue to the comedy of character, of which otherwise there is not in this play very much. And Luciana brings us altogether into the atmosphere of lyric love which pervades *The Two Gentlemen* and the greater part of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, and is half seriously disparaged in *Love's Labour's Lost*.

Still more significant is, finally, the story of Ægeon, which envelops the whole comic plot. It is probably Shakespeare's invention, and betrays the same instinct for accumulated effects and drastic contrasts. He had quadrupled the intricacies of the imbroglio by doubling the two lost Antipholuses with a second pair of twins; he quadruples the excitement of the final recovery by doubling them with a pair of lost parents, who at the same time recover their children and each other. And the foreboding of tragic harms which habitually overhangs for a while the early comedies, is here graver and more protracted than either in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* or *The Two Gentlemen*. Valentine's banishment and Hermia's destination to a nunnery or death arouse no serious suspense; but Ægeon is a pathetic and moving figure, whose story—a masterpiece of Shakespeare's early narrative—strikes a note at the outset with which the subsequent action is in somewhat too marked dissonance for ripe art.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

ACT I.

SCENE I. *A hall in the Duke's palace.*

Enter DUKE, ÆGEON, Gaoler, Officers, and other Attendants.

Æge. Proceed, Solinus, to procure my fall
And by the doom of death end woes and all.

Duke. Merchant of Syracuse, plead no more ;
I am not partial to infringe our laws :
The enmity and discord which of late
Sprung from the rancorous outrage of your duke
To merchants, our well-dealing countrymen,
Who, wanting guilders to redeem their lives,
Have seal'd his rigorous statutes with their bloods,
Excludes all pity from our threatening looks.

For, since the mortal and intestine jars
'Twixt thy seditious countrymen and us,
It hath in solemn synods been decreed,
Both by the Syracusians and ourselves,

2. *doom*, sentence.

4. *partial to infringe*, biassed in the direction which would lead me to infringe, *i.e.* on your side.

8. *guilders*, money in general

(properly a Dutch coin).

11. *intestine*, striking each combatant home. There is no question here of conflicts between members of the same state.

12. *seditious*, factious.

To admit no traffic to our adverse towns :
 Nay, more,
 If any born at Ephesus be seen
 At any Syracusian marts and fairs ;
 Again : if any Syracusian born
 Come to the bay of Ephesus, he dies,
 His goods confiscate to the duke's dispose,
 Unless a thousand marks be levied,
 To quit the penalty and to ransom him.
 Thy substance, valued at the highest rate,
 Cannot amount unto a hundred marks ;
 Therefore by law thou art condemn'd to die.

20

Æge. Yet this my comfort : when your words
 are done,
 My woes end likewise with the evening sun.

Duke. Well, Syracusian, say in brief the cause
 Why thou departed'st from thy native home
 And for what cause thou camest to Ephesus.

30

Æge. A heavier task could not have been
 imposed
 Than I to speak my griefs unspeakable :
 Yet, that the world may witness that my end
 Was wrought by nature, not by vile offence,
 I'll utter what my sorrow gives me leave.
 In Syracuse was I born, and wed
 Unto a woman, happy but for me,
 And by me, had not our hap been bad.
 With her I lived in joy ; our wealth increased
 By prosperous voyages I often made
 To Epidamnum ; till my father's death
 And the great care of goods at random left

40

27. *this*, this is (a frequent contraction).

27. *done*, carried into effect (with a play on the sense *finished*).

35. *nature*, natural affection.

39. *our* (dissyllabic).

42. *Epidamnum*. The Fl have *Epidamium*, but this is less likely to be Shakespeare's form than Epidamnum, which is used in Warner's translation of the *Menæchmi*.

Drew me from kind embracements of my spouse :
 From whom my absence was not six months old
 Before herself, almost at fainting under
 The pleasing punishment that women bear,
 Had made provision for her following me,
 And soon and safe arrived where I was.
 There had she not been long but she became 50
 A joyful mother of two goodly sons ;
 And, which was strange, the one so like the other
 As could not be distinguish'd but by names.
 That very hour and in the self-same inn
 A meaner woman was delivered
 Of such a burden, male twins, both alike :
 Those, for their parents were exceeding poor,
 I bought and brought up to attend my sons.
 My wife, not meanly proud of two such boys,
 Made daily motions for our home return : 60
 Unwilling I agreed ; alas ! too soon
 We came aboard.
 A league from Epidamnum had we sail'd,
 Before the always wind-obeying deep
 Gave any tragic instance of our harm :
 But longer did we not retain much hope ;
 For what obscured light the heavens did grant
 Did but convey unto our fearful minds
 A doubtful warrant of immediate death ;
 Which though myself would gladly have embraced, 70
 Yet the incessant weepings of my wife,
 Weeping before for what she saw must come,
 And piteous plainings of the pretty babes,
 That mourn'd for fashion, ignorant what to fear,
 Forced me to seek delays for them and me.

55. *meaner* ; F₁ *meane*. F₂ in v. 57.
 inserts *poor* before *meane*, a
 palpable mistake, since the
 poverty of the parents is noticed

60. *motions*, proposals.

65. *instance*, indication.

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ACT I

And this it was, for other means was none :
 The sailors sought for safety by our boat,
 And left the ship, then sinking-ripe, to us :
 My wife, more careful for the latter-born,
 Had fasten'd him unto a small spare mast, 80
 Such as seafaring men provide for storms ;
 To him one of the other twins was bound,
 Whilst I had been like heedful of the other :
 The children thus disposed, my wife and I,
 Fixing our eyes on whom our care was fix'd,
 Fasten'd ourselves at either end the mast ;
 And floating straight, obedient to the stream,
 Was carried towards Corinth, as we thought.
 At length the sun, gazing upon the earth,
 Dispersed those vapours that offended us ; 90
 And, by the benefit of his wished light,
 The seas wax'd calm, and we discovered
 Two ships from far making amain to us,
 Of Corinth that, of Epidaurus this :
 But ere they came,—O, let me say no more !
 Gather the sequel by that went before.

Duke. Nay, forward, old man ; do not break
 off so ;

For we may pity, though not pardon thee.

Æge. O, had the gods done so, I had not now
 Worthily term'd them merciless to us ! 100
 For, ere the ships could meet by twice five leagues,
 We were encounter'd by a mighty rock ;
 Which being violently borne upon,
 Our helpful ship was splitted in the midst ;
 So that, in this unjust divorce of us,
 Fortune had left to both of us alike
 What to delight in, what to sorrow for.
 Her part, poor soul ! seeming as burdened

78. *sinking-ripe*, on the point of sinking.

90. *offended*, impeded.

With lesser weight but not with lesser woe,
 Was carried with more speed before the wind ; 110
 And in our sight they three were taken up
 By fishermen of Corinth, as we thought.
 At length, another ship had seized on us ;
 And, knowing whom it was their hap to save,
 Gave healthful welcome to their shipwreck'd
 guests ;

And would have reft the fishers of their prey,
 Had not their bark been very slow of sail ;
 And therefore homeward did they bend their
 course.

Thus have you heard me sever'd from my bliss,
 That by misfortunes was my life prolong'd, 120
 To tell sad stories of my own mishaps.

Duke. And, for the sake of them thou sorrow-
 est for,

Do me the favour to dilate at full
 What hath befall'n of them and thee till now.

Æge. My youngest boy, and yet my eldest
 care,

At eighteen years became inquisitive
 After his brother : and importuned me
 That his attendant—so his case was like,
 Rest of his brother, but retain'd his name—
 Might bear him company in the quest of him : 130
 Whom whilst I labour'd of a love to see,
 I hazarded the loss of whom I loved.
 Five summers have I spent in furthest Greece,
 Roaming clean through the bounds of Asia,
 And, coasting homeward, came to Ephesus ;
 Hopeless to find, yet loath to leave unsought
 Or that or any place that harbours men.

125. *my youngest boy* ; this is sight.
 apparently inconsistent with v. 131. *of a love*, impelled by
 79, probably through an over-love.

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ACT I

But here must end the story of my life ;
And happy were I in my timely death,
Could all my travels warrant me they live. 140

Duke. Hapless Ægeon, whom the fates have
mark'd

To bear the extremity of dire mishap !
Now, trust me, were it not against our laws,
Against my crown, my oath, my dignity,
Which princes, would they, may not disannul,
My soul should sue as advocate for thee.
But, though thou art adjudged to the death
And passed sentence may not be recall'd
But to our honour's great disparagement,
Yet I will favour thee in what I can. 150
Therefore, merchant, I'll limit thee this day
To seek thy life by beneficial help :
Try all the friends thou hast in Ephesus ;
Beg thou, or borrow, to make up the sum,
And live ; if no, then thou art doom'd to die.
Gaoler, take him to thy custody.

Gaol. I will, my lord.

Æge. Hopeless and helpless doth Ægeon
wend,

But to procrastinate his lifeless end. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *The Mart.*

Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse, DROMIO of
Syracuse, *and* First Merchant.

First Mer. Therefore give out you are of
Epidamnum,

139. *timely*, early.

151. *limit thee this day*,
appoint this day as thy limit.

Scene II. ANTIPHOLUS of
Syracuse. In F₁ he is here

called *A. Erotes*, probably a
corruption of *Erraticus*, Anti-
pholus of Ephesus in Sc. iii.
being similarly introduced as
Sereptus (for *Surreptus*).

Lest that your goods too soon be confiscate.
 This very day a Syracusian merchant
 Is apprehended for arrival here ;
 And, not being able to buy out his life
 According to the statute of the town,
 Dies ere the weary sun set in the west.
 There is your money that I had to keep.

Ant. S. Go bear it to the Centaur, where we
 host,

And stay there, Dromio, till I come to thee. 10
 Within this hour it will be dinner-time :
 Till that, I'll view the manners of the town,
 Peruse the traders, gaze upon the buildings,
 And then return and sleep within mine inn,
 For with long travel I am stiff and weary.
 Get thee away.

Dro. S. Many a man would take you at your
 word,

And go indeed, having so good a mean. [*Exit.*

Ant. S. A trusty villain, sir, that very oft,
 When I am dull with care and melancholy, 20
 Lightens my humour with his merry jests.
 What, will you walk with me about the town,
 And then go to my inn and dine with me?

First Mer. I am invited, sir, to certain mer-
 chants,

Of whom I hope to make much benefit ;
 I crave your pardon. Soon at five o'clock,
 Please you, I'll meet with you upon the mart
 And afterward consort you till bed-time :
 My present business calls me from you now.

Ant. S. Farewell till then : I will go lose myself 30
 And wander up and down to view the city.

9. *host*, lodge.

18. *mean*, means.

19. *villain*, rogue (in playful

sense).

26. *Soon at five o'clock*, about

five.

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ACT I

First Mer. Sir, I commend you to your own content. [Exit.

Ant. S. He that commends me to mine own content

Commends me to the thing I cannot get.

I to the world am like a drop of water

That in the ocean seeks another drop,

Who, falling there to find his fellow forth,

Unseen, inquisitive, confounds himself :

So I, to find a mother and a brother,

In quest of them, unhappy, lose myself.

40

Enter DROMIO of Ephesus.

Here comes the almanac of my true date.

What now ? how chance thou art return'd so soon ?

Dro. E. Return'd so soon ! rather approach'd too late :

The capon burns, the pig falls from the spit,

The clock hath stricken twelve upon the bell ;

My mistress made it one upon my cheek :

She is so hot because the meat is cold ;

The meat is cold because you come not home ;

You come not home because you have no stomach ;

You have no stomach having broke your fast ;

But we that know what 'tis to fast and pray

Are penitent for your default to-day.

Ant. S. Stop in your wind, sir : tell me this, I pray :

Where have you left the money that I gave you ?

Dro. E. O,—sixpence, that I had o' Wednesday last

To pay the saddler for my mistress' crupper ?

The saddler had it, sir ; I kept it not.

Ant. S. I am not in a sportive humour now :

41. *the almanac*, etc. ; Dromio of Syracuse having been born in the same hour with himself.

Tell me, and dally not, where is the money?
 We being strangers here, how darest thou trust 60
 So great a charge from thine own custody?

Dro. E. I pray you, jest, sir, as you sit at dinner:
 I from my mistress come to you in post;
 If I return, I shall be post indeed,
 For she will score your fault upon my pate.
 Methinks your maw, like mine, should be your
 clock

And strike you home without a messenger.

Ant. S. Come, Dromio, come, these jests are
 out of season;

Reserve them till a merrier hour than this.

Where is the gold I gave in charge to thee? 70

Dro. E. To me, sir? why, you gave no gold
 to me.

Ant. S. Come on, sir knave, have done your
 foolishness

And tell me how thou hast disposed thy charge.

Dro. E. My charge was but to fetch you from
 the mart

Home to your house, the Phoenix, sir, to dinner:
 My mistress and her sister stays for you.

Ant. S. Now, as I am a Christian, answer me
 In what safe place you have bestow'd my money,
 Or I shall break that merry scone of yours
 That stands on tricks when I am undisposed: 80
 Where is the thousand marks thou hadst of me?

Dro. E. I have some marks of yours upon my
 pate,

Some of my mistress' marks upon my shoulders,
 But not a thousand marks between you both.

If I should pay your worship those again,
 Perchance you will not bear them patiently.

64. *post indeed*, i.e. like the post in a tavern on which the score was chalked.

Ant. S. Thy mistress' marks? what mistress,
slave, hast thou?

Dro. E. Your worship's wife, my mistress at
the Phoenix;

She that doth fast till you come home to dinner
And prays that you will hie you home to dinner. 90

Ant. S. What, wilt thou flout me thus unto
my face,
Being forbid? There, take you that, sir knave.

Dro. E. What mean you, sir? for God's sake,
hold your hands!

Nay, an you will not, sir, I'll take my heels. [*Exit.*

Ant. S. Upon my life, by some device or other
The villain is o'er-raught of all my money.

They say this town is full of cozenage,
As, nimble jugglers that deceive the eye,
Dark-working sorcerers that change the mind,
Soul-killing witches that deform the body, 100
Disguised cheaters, prating mountebanks,
And many such-like liberties of sin:

If it prove so, I will be gone the sooner.
I'll to the Centaur, to go seek this slave:

I greatly fear my money is not safe. [*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I. *The house of ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus.*

Enter ADRIANA and LUCIANA.

Adr. Neither my husband nor the slave re-
turn'd,

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>96. <i>o'er-raught</i>, overreached.
97. <i>cozenage</i>, cheating.
102. <i>liberties of sin</i>, licensed</p> | <p>sinner (abstract for concrete);
'licensed,' in so far as their occu-
pations were recognised callings.</p> |
|---|---|

That in such haste I sent to seek his master !
 Sure, Luciana, it is two o'clock.

Luc. Perhaps some merchant hath invited him
 And from the mart he's somewhere gone to dinner.
 Good sister, let us dine and never fret :

A man is master of his liberty :

Time is their master, and when they see time
 They'll go or come : if so, be patient, sister.

Adr. Why should their liberty than ours be
 more ?

Luc. Because their business still lies out o'
 door.

Adr. Look, when I serve him so, he takes it
 ill.

Luc. O, know he is the bridle of your will.

Adr. There's none but asses will be bridled so.

Luc. Why, headstrong liberty is lash'd with woe.

There's nothing situate under heaven's eye
 But hath his bound, in earth, in sea, in sky :
 The beasts, the fishes and the winged fowls,
 Are their males' subjects and at their controls :
 Men, more divine, the masters of all these,
 Lords of the wide world and wild watery seas,
 Indued with intellectual sense and souls,
 Of more pre-eminence than fish and fowls,
 Are masters to their females, and their lords :
 Then let your will attend on their accords.

Adr. This servitude makes you to keep unwed.

Luc. Not this, but troubles of the marriage-bed.

Adr. But, were you wedded, you would bear
 some sway.

Luc. Ere I learn love, I'll practise to obey.

Adr. How if your husband start some other
 where ?

30. *where* ; Johnson ingeniously, but without need, proposed
 'some other *hare* ?'

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ACT II

Luc. Till he come home again, I would forbear.

Adr. Patience unmoved! no marvel though she pause;

They can be meek that have no other cause.

A wretched soul, bruised with adversity,

We bid be quiet when we hear it cry;

But were we burden'd with like weight of pain,

As much or more we should ourselves complain:

So thou, that hast no unkind mate to grieve thee,

With urging helpless patience wouldst relieve me;

But, if thou live to see like right bereft,

40

This fool-begg'd patience in thee will be left.

Luc. Well, I will marry one day, but to try.

Here comes your man; now is your husband nigh.

Enter DROMIO of Ephesus.

Adr. Say is your tardy master now at hand?

Dro. E. Nay, he's at two hands with me, and that my two ears can witness.

Adr. Say, didst thou speak with him? know'st thou his mind?

Dro. E. Ay, ay, he told his mind upon mine ear:

Beshrew his hand, I scarce could understand it.

Luc. Spake he so doubtfully, thou couldst not
feel his meaning? 50

Dro. E. Nay, he struck so plainly, I could too well feel his blows; and withal so doubtfully that I could scarce understand them.

Adr. But say, I prithee, is he coming home? It seems he hath great care to please his wife.

32. *pause*, remain quiet.

33. *no other cause*, no cause to be otherwise.

41. *fool-begg'd*, foolishly de-

manded; but probably with a play upon the phrase *to beg a fool*. See note to *Love's Labour's Lost*, v. 2. 490.

Dro. E. Why, mistress, sure my master is
horn-mad.

Adr. Horn-mad, thou villain !

Dro. E. I mean not cuckold-mad ;
But, sure, he is ~~stark~~ mad.

When I desired him to come home to dinner, 60
He ask'd me for a thousand marks in gold :

'Tis dinner-time,' quoth I ; 'My gold !' quoth
he :

'Your meat doth burn,' quoth I ; 'My gold !'
quoth he :

'Will you come home?' quoth I ; 'My gold !'
quoth he,

'Where is the thousand marks I gave thee,
villain ?'

'The pig,' quoth I, 'is burn'd ;' 'My gold !'
quoth he :

'My mistress, sir,' quoth I ; 'Hang up thy mis-
tress !

I know not thy mistress ; out on thy mistress !'

Luc. Quoth who ?

Dro. E. Quoth my master :

'I know,' quoth he, 'no house, no wife, no mis-
tress.' 70

So that my errand, due unto my tongue,
I thank him, I bare home upon my shoulders ;
For, in conclusion, he did beat me there.

Adr. Go back again, thou slave, and fetch
him home.

Dro. E. Go back again, and be new beaten
home ?

For God's sake, send some other messenger.

Adr. Back, slave, or I will break thy pate
across.

58. *horn-mad*, like a mad bull ; usually with an allusion to the
'horn' of the cuckold.

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ACT II

Dro. E. And he will bless that cross with
other beating :

Between you I shall have a holy head.

80

Adr. Hence, prating peasant ! fetch thy master
home.

Dro. E. Am I so round with you as you with me,
That like a football you do spurn me thus ?

You spurn me hence, and he will spurn me hither :
If I last in this service, you must case me in
leather. [*Exit.*

Luc. Fie, how impatience loureth in your face !

Adr. His company must do his minions grace,
Whilst I at home starve for a merry look.

Hath homely age the alluring beauty took
From my poor cheek ? then he hath wasted it :

90

Are my discourses dull ? barren my wit ?

If voluble and sharp discourse be marr'd,

Unkindness blunts it more than marble hard :

Do their gay vestments his affections bait ?

That 's not my fault : he 's master of my state :

What ruins are in me that can be found,

By him not ruin'd ? then is he the ground

Of my defeatures. My decayed fair

A sunny look of his would soon repair :

But, too unruly deer, he breaks the pale

100

And feeds from home ; poor I am but his stale.

Luc. Self-harming jealousy ! fie, beat it hence !

Adr. Unfeeling fools can with such wrongs
dispense.

82. *round*, blunt, plain -
spoken ; with a play on the
common sense.

98. *defeatures*, disfigurements.
ib. *fair*, beauty.

101. *but his stale*, only his
ostensible wife,—the mask, or
'stalking-horse,' under cover of

which he pursues his real game.
The same phrase is used, but in an-
other sense, by Adriana's proto-
type in W. W.'s translation of
the *Menachmi*, who complains
to her father that her husband
'makes me a *stale* and a *laugh-*
ing-stock to all the world.'

103. *dispense with*, excuse.

I know his eye doth homage elsewhere ;
 Or else what lets it but he would be here ?
 Sister, you know he promised me a chain ;
 Would that alone, alone he would detain,
 So he would keep fair quarter with his bed !
 I see the jewel best enamelled
 Will lose his beauty ; yet the gold bides still,
 That others touch, and often touching will
 Wear gold : and no man that hath a name,
 By falsehood and corruption doth it shame.
 Since that my beauty cannot please his eye,
 I'll weep what's left away, and weeping die.

110

Luc. How many fond fools serve mad jealousy !
 [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. *A public place.*

Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse.

Ant. S. The gold I gave to Dromio is laid up
 Safe at the Centaur ; and the heedful slave
 Is wander'd forth, in care to seek me out
 By computation and mine host's report.

105. *lets*, hinders.

109 f. 'The best enamelled jewel tarnishes ; but the gold setting keeps its lustre however it may be worn by the touch ; similarly, a man of assured reputation can commit domestic infidelities without blasting it. I have therefore no resource but to weep, and weeping die.' This gives a fair meaning to a passage which many editors have given up as corrupt. Theobald introduced wholesale emendations into the Ff text, only one of

which (*wear* for *where*, v. 112) is certain : the others are 'and though' for *yet* (110), 'and so a man' for *ana no man* (112) ; giving the sense, that as gold is finally affected by contact (or assaying), so a man's good name is finally affected by his falsehood and corruption.' This is fair (though somewhat flat) sense, but obtained at far too great a cost of violence to the text. In particular v. 110 has the stamp of genuineness. *Wear* (dissyllabic) is a common Shakespearian scansion.

The Comedy of Errors

ACT II

I could not speak with Dromio since at first
I sent him from the mart. See, here he comes.

Enter DROMIO of Syracuse.

How now, sir! is your merry humour alter'd?
As you love strokes, so jest with me again.
You know no Centaur? you received no gold?
Your mistress sent to have me home to dinner? 10
My house was at the Phoenix? Wast thou mad,
That thus so madly thou didst answer me?

Dro. S. What answer, sir? when spake I such
a word?

Ant. S. Even now, even here, not half an
hour since.

Dro. S. I did not see you since you sent me
hence,
Home to the Centaur, with the gold you gave
me.

Ant. S. Villain, thou didst deny the gold's
receipt.
And told'st me of a mistress and a dinner;
For which, I hope, thou felt'st I was displeased.

Dro. S. I am glad to see you in this merry
vein: 20
What means this jest? I pray you, master, tell
me.

Ant. S. Yea, dost thou jeer and flout me in
the teeth?
Think'st thou I jest? Hold, take thou that, and
that. [*Beating him.*]

Dro. S. Hold, sir, for God's sake! now your
jest is earnest:
Upon what bargain do you give it me?

Ant. S. Because that I familiarly sometimes
Do use you for my fool and chat with you,

Your sauciness will jest upon my love
 And make a common of my serious hours.
 When the sun shines let foolish gnats make sport, 30
 But creep in crannies when he hides his beams.
 If you will jest with me, know my aspect
 And fashion your demeanour to my looks,
 Or I will beat this method in your sconce.

Dro. S. Sconce call you it? so you would leave
 battering, I had rather have it a head: an you
 use these blows long, I must get a sconce for my
 head and insconce it too; or else I shall seek my
 wit in my shoulders. But, I pray, sir, why am I
 beaten? 40

Ant. S. Dost thou not know?

Dro. S. Nothing, sir, but that I am beaten.

Ant. S. Shall I tell you why?

Dro. S. Ay, sir, and wherefore; for they say
 every why hath a wherefore.

Ant. S. Why, first,—for flouting me; and
 then, wherefore,—

For urging it the second time to me.

Dro. S. Was there ever any man thus beaten
 out of season,
 When in the why and the wherefore is neither
 rhyme nor reason?

Well, sir, I thank you. 50

Ant. S. Thank me, sir! for what?

Dro. S. Marry, sir, for this something that
 you gave me for nothing.

Ant. S. I'll make you amends next, to give

28. *jest upon*, trifle with.
 Dyce's emendation *jet upon*
 ('trample, intrude, upon'),
 though perhaps too tragic for
 the occasion, is very plausible.
 But the antithesis 'serious' is
 against it.

29. *make a common*, treat my
 hours of business as common
 property in which every one is
 free to indulge his humour.

34. *sconce*, head. Primarily,
 a fortification, defence; hence
 Dromio's quibble.

The Comedy of Errors

ACT II

you nothing for something. But say, sir, is it dinner-time?

Dro. S. No, sir: I think the meat wants that I have.

Ant. S. In good time, sir; what's that?

Dro. S. Basting.

Ant. S. Well, sir, then 'twill be dry.

60

Dro. S. If it be, sir, I pray you, eat none of it.

Ant. S. Your reason?

Dro. S. Lest it make you choleric and purchase me another dry basting.

Ant. S. Well, sir, learn to jest in good time: there's a time for all things.

Dro. S. I durst have denied that, before you were so choleric.

Ant. S. By what rule, sir?

Dro. S. Marry, sir, by a rule as plain as the plain bald pate of father Time himself.

Ant. S. Let's hear it.

Dro. S. There's no time for a man to recover his hair that grows bald by nature.

Ant. S. May he not do it by fine and recovery?

Dro. S. Yes, to pay a fine for a periwig and recover the lost hair of another man.

Ant. S. Why is Time such a niggard of hair, being, as it is, so plentiful an excrement?

Dro. S. Because it is a blessing that he bestows on beasts; and what he hath scantied men in hair he hath given them in wit.

Ant. S. Why, but there's many a man hath more hair than wit.

58. *in good time*, 'indeed!' (in ironical acquiescence).

63. *Lest it make you choleric*. Dry, overdone meat was said to 'engender choler,' *Tam. of Shrew*, iv. i. 175.

75. *fine and recovery*, legal processes 'used to convert an estate tail into a fee-simple' (Ritson), *i.e.* to confer absolute ownership.

79. *excrement*, outgrowth.

Dro. S. Not a man of those but he hath the wit to lose his hair.

Ant. S. Why, thou didst conclude hairy men plain dealers without wit.

Dro. S. The plainer dealer, the sooner lost : yet he loseth it in a kind of jollity.

90

Ant. S. For what reason ?

Dro. S. For two ; and sound ones too.

Ant. S. Nay, not sound, I pray you.

Dro. S. Sure ones then.

Ant. S. Nay, not sure, in a thing falsing.

Dro. S. Certain ones then.

Ant. S. Name them.

Dro. S. The one, to save the money that he spends in tiring ; the other that at dinner they should not drop in his porridge.

100

Ant. S. You would all this time have proved there is no time for all things.

Dro. S. Marry, and did, sir ; namely, no time to recover hair lost by nature.

Ant. S. But your reason was not substantial, why there is no time to recover.

Dro. S. Thus I mend it : Time himself is bald and therefore to the world's end will have bald followers.

Ant. S. I knew 'twould be a bald conclusion : But, soft, who wafts us yonder ?

110

Enter ADRIANA and LUCIANA.

Adr. Ay, ay, Antipholus, look strange and frown :

85. *the wit to lose his hair.*
The phrase contains an equiv-
oque which explains the word
jollity in v. 90, and renders
Staunton's substitution of *policy*
there needless.

95. *falsing*, deluding, de-
lusive. 'To false' was to
'falsify' or 'to play false.'

99. *tiring*, attiring.

111. *wafts*, beckons.

Some other mistress hath thy sweet aspects ;
 I am not Adriana nor thy wife.
 The time was once when thou unurged wouldst
 vow

That never words were music to thine ear,
 That never object pleasing in thine eye,
 That never touch well welcome to thy hand,
 That never meat sweet-savour'd in thy taste,
 Unless I spake, or look'd, or touch'd, or carved
 to thee. 120

How comes it now, my husband, O, how comes it,
 That thou art thus estranged from thyself ?
 Thyself I call it, being strange to me,
 That, undividable, incorporate,
 Am better than thy dear self's better part.
 Ah, do not tear away thyself from me !
 For know, my love, as easy mayst thou fall
 A drop of water in the breaking gulf
 And take unmingled thence that drop again,
 Without addition or diminishing, 130
 As take from me thyself and not me too.
 How dearly would it touch thee to the quick,
 Shouldst thou but hear I were licentious
 And that this body, consecrate to thee,
 By ruffian lust should be contaminate !
 Wouldst thou not spit at me and spurn at me,
 And hurl the name of husband in my face,
 And tear the stain'd skin off my harlot-brow,
 And from my false hand cut the wedding-ring,
 And break it with a deep-divorcing vow ? 140
 I know thou canst ; and therefore see thou do it.
 I am possess'd with an adulterate blot ;
 My blood is mingled with the crime of lust :

127. *fall* (trans.), let fall.

128. *gulf*, whirlpool.

143. *crime of lust*, Warbur-

ton's conjecture *grime* is rendered
 plausible by the context, and
 also by iii. 2. 106.

For if we two be one and thou play false,
 I do digest the poison of thy flesh,
 Being strumpeted by thy contagion.
 Keep then fair league and truce with thy true bed ;
 I live distain'd, thou undishonoured.

Ant. S. Plead you to me, fair dame? I know
 you not :

In Ephesus I am but two hours old, 150
 As strange unto your town as to your talk ;
 Who, every word by all my wit being scann'd,
 Wants wit in all one word to understand.

Luc. Fie, brother! how the world is changed
 with you !

When were you wont to use my sister thus?
 She sent for you by Dromio home to dinner.

Ant. S. By Dromio?

Dro. S. By me?

Adr. By thee; and this thou didst return
 from him,

That he did buffet thee and in his blows 160
 Denied my house for his, me for his wife.

Ant. S. Did you converse, sir, with this gentle-
 woman?

What is the course and drift of your compact?

Dro. S. I, sir? I never saw her till this time.

Ant. S. Villain, thou liest; for even her very
 words

Didst thou deliver to me on the mart.

148. *distain'd*, stained. Most editors alter to *unstain'd* or to *dishonoured*. The only possible interpretation of the original text is Delius': 'I, as wife, receive the stain of your present conduct, while you, as husband, suffer no loss of honour.' This certainly appeals far less to our instinct

of style than the change to *unstained*, which would make Adriana refer to the future she hopes for, instead of the actuality she loathes. But it accords excellently with the interpretation given above of the difficult passage ii. i. 109 f.

153. *wants*, want.

The Comedy of Errors

ACT II

Dro. S. I never spake with her in all my life.

Ant. S. How can she thus then call us by
our names?

Unless it be by inspiration.

Adr. How ill agrees it with your gravity
To counterfeit thus grossly with your slave,
Abetting him to thwart me in my mood!
Be it my wrong you are from me exempt,
But wrong not that wrong with a more contempt.
Come, I will fasten on this sleeve of thine:
Thou art an elm, my husband, I a vine,
Whose weakness married to thy stronger state
Makes me with thy strength to communicate:
If aught possess thee from me, it is dross,
Usurping ivy, brier, or idle moss;
Who, all for want of pruning, with intrusion
Infect thy sap and live on thy confusion.

170

180

Ant. S. To me she speaks; she moves me for
her theme:

What, was I married to her in my dream?
Or sleep I now and think I hear all this?
What error drives our eyes and ears amiss?
Until I know this sure uncertainty,
I'll entertain the offer'd fallacy.

Luc. Dromio, go bid the servants spread for
dinner.

Dro. S. O, for my beads! I cross me for a sinner.
This is the fairy land: O spite of spites!
We talk with goblins, owls and sprites:

190

173, 174. 'Your separation from me I submit to endure, but do not aggravate that injury by showing me even greater contempt than that implies.'

174. *more*, greater.

178. *communicate with*, share.

183. *moves me for her theme*, appeals to me in furtherance of

her object.

192. *owls*, 'screech-owls,' regarded as 'unlucky.' The line is probably defective, no stylistic reason for the introduction of a four-foot verse being apparent. But no convincing emendation has been suggested. *F₂* gives *and elves sprites*.

If we obey them not, this will ensue,
They'll suck our breath or pinch us black and
blue.

Luc. Why pratest thou to thyself and answer'st not?

Dromio, thou drone, thou snail, thou slug, thou
sot!

Dro. S. I am transformed, master, am I not?

Ant. S. I think thou art in mind, and so am I.

Dro. S. Nay, master, both in mind and in my
shape.

Ant. S. 'Thou hast thine own form.

Dro. S. No, I am an ape. 200

Luc. If thou art changed to aught, 'tis to an
ass.

Dro. S. 'Tis true; she rides me and I long
for grass.

'Tis so, I am an ass; else it could never be
But I should know her as well as she knows
me.

Adr. Come, come, no longer will I be a fool,
To put the finger in the eye and weep,
Whilst man and master laugh my woes to scorn.
Come, sir, to dinner. Dromio, keep the gate.
Husband, I'll dine above with you to-day,
And shrive you of a thousand idle pranks. 210
Sirrah, if any ask you for your master,
Say he dines forth and let no creature enter.
Come, sister. Dromio, play the porter well.

Ant. S. Am I in earth, in heaven, or in hell?
Sleeping or waking? mad or well-advised?
Known unto these, and to myself disguised!
I'll say as they say and persevere so,
And in this mist at all adventures go.

Dro. S. Master, shall I be porter at the gate?

215. *well-advised*, in my senses.

The Comedy of Errors

ACT III

Adr. Ay ; and let none enter, lest I break your
pate.

Luc. Come, come, Antipholus, we dine too
late. 220

[Exeunt.]

ACT III.

SCENE I. *Before the house of ANTIPHOLUS of
Ephesus.*

*Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus, DROMIO of
Ephesus, ANGELO, and BALTHAZAR.*

Ant. E. Good Signior Angelo, you must ex-
cuse us all ;

My wife is shrewish when I keep not hours :

Say that I linger'd with you at your shop

To see the making of her carcanet,

And that to-morrow you will bring it home.

But here's a villain that would face me down

He met me on the mart, and that I beat him,

And charged him with a thousand marks in gold,

And that I did deny my wife and house.

Thou drunkard, thou, what didst thou mean by
this ? 10

Dro. E. Say what you will, sir, but I know what
I know ;

That you beat me at the mart, I have your hand
to show :

If the skin were parchment and the blows you
gave were ink,

Your own handwriting would tell you what I think.

Ant. E. I think thou art an ass.

4. *carcanet*, necklace.

Dro. E. Marry, so it doth appear
By the wrongs I suffer and the blows I bear.
I should kick, being kick'd ; and, being at that pass,
You would keep from my heels and beware of
an ass.

Ant. E. You're sad, Signior Balthazar : pray
God our cheer
May answer my good will and your good wel-
come here.

Bal. I hold your dainties cheap, sir, and your
welcome dear.

Ant. E. O, Signior Balthazar, either at flesh
or fish,
A table full of welcome makes scarce one dainty
dish.

Bal. Good meat, sir, is common ; that every
churl affords.

Ant. E. And welcome more common ; for
that's nothing but words.

Bal. Small cheer and great welcome makes a
merry feast.

Ant. E. Ay to a niggardly host and more
sparing guest ;
But though my cates be mean, take them in good
part ;
Better cheer may you have, but not with better
heart.

But, soft ! my door is lock'd. Go bid them let us in. 30

Dro. E. Maud, Bridget, Marian, Cicely, Gillian,
Ginn !

Dro. S. [*Within*] Mome, malt-horse, capon,
coxcomb, idiot, patch !

24. *churl*. Not, in Eliza-
bethan usage, necessarily a
niggard.

28. *cates*, viands.

32. *mome*, dolt.

32. *malt-horse*, dray-horse.
ib. *patch*, fool. The word
was used both with reference
to the motley of a fool or jester,
and to patched clothes.

Either get thee from the door or sit down at the hatch.

Dost thou conjure for wenches, that thou call'st for such store,

When one is one too many? Go get thee from the door.

Dro. E. What patch is made our porter? My master stays in the street.

Dro. S. [Within] Let him walk from whence he came, lest he catch cold on's feet.

Ant. E. Who talks within there? ho, open the door!

Dro. S. [Within] Right, sir; I'll tell you when, an you'll tell me wherefore.

Ant. E. Wherefore? for my dinner: I have not dined to-day.

Dro. S. [Within] Nor to-day here you must not; come again when you may.

Ant. E. What art thou that keepest me out from the house I owe?

Dro. S. [Within] The porter for this time, sir, and my name is Dromio.

Dro. E. O villain! thou hast stolen both mine office and my name.

The one ne'er got me credit, the other mickle blame.
If thou hadst been Dromio to-day in my place,
Thou wouldst have changed thy face for a name
or thy name for an ass.

Luce. [Within] What a coil is there, Dromio?
who are those at the gate?

42. *owe*, own.

47. *for an ass*. Collier needlessly altered to *for a face*, partly on the ground of rhyme. But *ass* in *Eliz. Eng.* was a passable rhyme to *face* (as to *ace* which often contains a pun on *ass*).

Dromio means that if Dromio S. had been in his place when he was flogged, instead of stealing the name Dromio he would have been glad to get rid of it, or else have proved himself an ass.

48. *coil*, disturbance, ado.

Dro. E. Let my master in, Luce.

Luce. [*Within*] Faith, no; he comes too late;
And so tell your master.

Dro. E. O Lord, I must laugh! 50
Have at you with a proverb—Shall I set in my
staff?

Luce. [*Within*] Have at you with another;
that's—When? can you tell?

Dro. S. [*Within*] If thy name be called Luce,—
Luce, thou hast answer'd him well.

Ant. E. Do you hear, you minion? you'll let
us in, I hope?

Luce. [*Within*] I thought to have ask'd you.

Dro. S. [*Within*] And you said no.

Dro. E. So, come, help: well struck! there
was blow for blow.

Ant. E. Thou baggage, let me in.

Luce. [*Within*] Can you tell for whose sake?

Dro. E. Master, knock the door hard.

Luce. [*Within*] Let him knock till it ache.

Ant. E. You'll cry for this, minion, if I beat
the door down.

Luce. [*Within*] What needs all that, and a
pair of stocks in the town? 60

Adr. [*Within*] Who is that at the door that
keeps all this noise?

Dro. S. [*Within*] By my troth, your town is
troubled with unruly boys.

Ant. E. Are you there, wife? you might
have come before.

Adr. [*Within*] Your wife, sir knave! go get
you from the door.

Dro. E. If you went in pain, master, this
'knave' would go sore.

52. *When? can you tell?* a proverbial way of parrying im-
portunate questions.

The Comedy of Errors

ACT III

Ang. Here is neither cheer, sir, nor welcome :
we would fain have either.

Bal. In debating which was best, we shall
part with neither.

Dro. E. They stand at the door, master ; bid
them welcome hither.

Ant. E. There is something in the wind, that
we cannot get in.

Dro. E. You would say so, master, if your
garments were thin.

Your cake there is warm within ; you stand here
in the cold :

It would make a man mad as a buck, to be so
bought and sold.

Ant. E. Go fetch me something : I'll break
ope the gate.

Dro. S. [*Within*] Break any breaking here,
and I'll break your knave's pate.

Dro. E. A man may break a word with you,
sir, and words are but wind.

Ay, and break it in your face, so he break it not
behind.

Dro. S. [*Within*] It seems thou want'st
breaking : out upon thee, hind !

Dro. E. Here's too much 'out upon thee !' I
pray thee, let me in.

Dro. S. [*Within*] Ay, when fowls have no
feathers and fish have no fin.

Ant. E. Well I'll break in : go borrow me a crow. 80

Dro. E. A crow without feather ? Master,
mean you so ?

For a fish without a fin, there's a fowl without a
feather :

If a crow help us in, sirrah, we'll pluck a crow
together.

72. *bought and sold*, deluded and betrayed.

Ant. E. Go get thee gone ; fetch me an iron crow.

Bal. Have patience, sir ; O, let it not be so !
 Herein you war against your reputation
 And draw within the compass of suspect
 The unviolated honour of your wife.
 Once this,—your long experience of her wisdom,
 Her sober virtue, years and modesty, 90
 Plead on her part some cause to you unknown ;
 And doubt not, sir, but she will well excuse
 Why at this time the doors are made against you.
 Be ruled by me : depart in patience,
 And let us to the Tiger all to dinner,
 And about evening come yourself alone
 To know the reason of this strange restraint.
 If by strong hand you offer to break in
 Now in the stirring passage of the day,
 A vulgar comment will be made of it, 100
 And that supposed by the common rout
 Against your yet ungalled estimation
 That may with foul intrusion enter in
 And dwell upon your grave when you are dead ;
 For slander lives upon succession,
 For ever housed where it gets possession.

Ant. E. You have prevail'd : I will depart
 in quiet,
 And, in despite of mirth, mean to be merry,
 I know a wench of excellent discourse,
 Pretty and witty ; wild, and yet, too, gentle : 110
 There will we dine. This woman that I mean,
 My wife—but, I protest, without desert—
 Hath oftentimes upbraided me withal :

89. *once*, once for all (like Ger. *einmal*).

102. *ungalled estimation*, unblemished reputation.

105. *lives upon succession*, i.e. holds its ground securely, like an heir who has come into his property.

The Comedy of Errors

ACT III

To her will we to dinner. [*To Ang.*] Get you home

And fetch the chain ; by this I know 'tis made :
Bring it, I pray you, to the Porpentine ;
For there's the house : that chain will I bestow—
Be it for nothing but to spite my wife—
Upon mine hostess there : good sir, make haste.
Since mine own doors refuse to entertain me, 120
I'll knock elsewhere, to see if they'll disdain me.

Ang. I'll meet you at that place some hour hence.

Ant. E. Do so. This jest shall cost me some expense. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. *The same.*

28/6/29

Enter LUCIANA and ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse.

Luc. And may it be that you have quite forgot

A husband's office ? shall, Antipholus,
Even in the spring of love, thy love-springs rot ?

Shall love, in building, grow so ruinous ?
If you did wed my sister for her wealth,
Then for her wealth's sake use her with more kindness :

Or if you like elsewhere, do it by stealth ;
Muffle your false love with some show of blindness :

Let not my sister read it in your eye ;
Be not thy tongue thy own shame's orator ; 10
Look sweet, speak fair, become disloyalty ;
Apparel vice like virtue's harbinger ;

3. *love-springs*, young shoots of love.

11. *become disloyalty*, give an attractive, becoming, outward air to your inner falseness.

Bear a fair presence, though your heart be
tainted ;

Teach sin the carriage of a holy saint ;
Be secret-false : what need she be acquainted ?

What simple thief brags of his own attainment ?
'Tis double wrong, to truant with your bed

And let her read it in thy looks at board :
Shame hath a bastard fame, well managed ;

Ill deeds are doubled with an evil word. 20

Alas, poor women ! make us but believe,

Being compact of credit, that you love us ;
Though others have the arm, show us the sleeve ;

We in your motion turn and you may move us.
Then, gentle brother, get you in again ;

Comfort my sister, cheer her, call her wife :

'Tis holy sport to be a little vain,
When the sweet breath of flattery conquers
strife.

Ant. S. Sweet mistress,—what your name is
else, I know not,

Nor by what wonder you do hit of mine,— 30
Less in your knowledge and your grace you
show not

Than our earth's wonder ; more than earth
divine.

Teach me, dear creature, how to think and
speak ;

Lay open to my earthy-gross conceit,
Smother'd in errors, feeble, shallow, weak,

The folded meaning of your words' deceit.

Against my soul's pure truth why labour you

To make it wander in an unknown field ?

Are you a god ? would you create me new ?

16. *attaint*, stain, disgrace.

18. *board*, table.

22. *compact of credit*, made
up of credulity.

34. *conceit*, apprehension.

The Comedy of Errors

ACT III

Transform me then, and to your power I'll
yield.

40

But if that I am I, then well I know

Your weeping sister is no wife of mine,
Nor to her bed no homage do I owe :

Far more, far more to you do I decline.

O, train me not, sweet mermaid, with thy note,
To drown me in thy sister's flood of tears :

Sing, siren, for thyself and I will dote :

Spread o'er the silver waves thy golden hairs,
And as a bed I'll take them and there lie,

And in that glorious supposition think

50

He gains by death that hath such means to die :

Let Love, being light, be drowned if she
sink !

Luc. What, are you mad, that you do reason
so ?

Ant. S. Not mad, but mated ; how, I do not
know.

Luc. It is a fault that springeth from your eye.

Ant. S. For gazing on your beams, fair sun,
being by.

Luc. Gaze where you should, and that will
clear your sight.

Ant. S. As good to wink, sweet love, as look
on night.

Luc. Why call you me love ? call my sister
so.

Ant. S. Thy sister's sister.

Luc. That's my sister.

Ant. S. No ; 60

It is thyself, mine own self's better part,

44. *decline*, incline.

45. *train*, entice.

53. *reason*, discourse.

54. *mated*, confounded, paralysed (with a play on the other sense : 'given as a mate').

58. *wink*, be blind.

Mine eye's clear eye, my dear heart's dearer heart,
My food, my fortune and my sweet hope's aim,
My sole earth's heaven and my heaven's claim.

Luc. All this my sister is, or else should be.

Ant. S. Call thyself sister, sweet, for I aim thee.
Thee will I love and with thee lead my life :
Thou hast no husband yet nor I no wife.
Give me thy hand.

Luc. O, soft, sir ! hold you still :
I'll fetch my sister, to get her good will. [*Exit.* 70

Enter DROMIO of Syracuse.

Ant. S. Why, how now, Dromio ! where
runn'st thou so fast ?

Dro. S. Do you know me, sir ? am I Dromio ?
am I your man ? am I myself ?

Ant. S. Thou art Dromio, thou art my man,
thou art thyself.

Dro. S. I am an ass, I am a woman's man
and besides myself.

Ant. S. What woman's man ? and how besides
thyself ?

Dro. S. Marry, sir, besides myself, I am due
to a woman ; one that claims me, one that haunts
me, one that will have me.

Ant. S. What claim lays she to thee ?

Dro. S. Marry, sir, such claim as you would
lay to your horse ; and she would have me as a
beast : not that, I being a beast, she would have
me ; but that she, being a very beastly creature,
lays claim to me.

Ant. S. What is she ?

64. *my sole earth's heaven,*
etc., my only heaven on earth
and all that I demand from

heaven hereafter.

66. *aim,* mean, intend.
am, corrected by Capell.

The Comedy of Errors

ACT III

Dro. S. A very reverent body ; ay, such a one as a man may not speak of without he say 'Sir-reverence.' I have but lean luck in the match, and yet is she a wondrous fat marriage.

Ant. S. How dost thou mean a fat marriage?

Dro. S. Marry, sir, she's the kitchen wench and all grease ; and I know not what use to put her to but to make a lamp of her and run from her by her own light. I warrant, her rags and the tallow in them will burn a Poland winter : if ¹⁰⁰ she lives till doomsday, she'll burn a week longer than the whole world.

Ant. S. What complexion is she of?

Dro. S. Swart, like my shoe, but her face nothing like so clean kept : for why, she sweats ; a man may go over shoes in the grime of it.

Ant. S. That's a fault that water will mend.

Dro. S. No, sir, 'tis in grain ; Noah's flood could not do it.

Ant. S. What's her name?

Dro. S. Nell, sir ; but her name and three quarters, that's an ell and three quarters, will not measure her from hip to hip.

Ant. S. Then she bears some breadth?

Dro. S. No longer from head to foot than from hip to hip : she is spherical, like a globe ; I could find out countries in her.

Ant. S. In what part of her body stands Ireland?

Dro. S. Marry, sir, in her buttocks : I found ¹²⁰ it out by the bogs.

Ant. S. Where Scotland?

93. *Sir-reverence*, a popular indecorous allusions, corruption of 'saving reverence,' *salva reverentia*, used as an apologetic way of introducing

108. *in grain*, fast-dyed, 'ingrained.'

Dro. S. I found it by the barrenness ; hard in the palm of the hand.

Ant. S. Where France ?

Dro. S. In her forehead ; armed and reverted, making war against her heir.

Ant. S. Where England ?

Dro. S. I looked for the chalky cliffs, but I could find no whiteness in them ; but I guess it stood in her chin, by the salt rheum that ran between France and it.

Ant. S. Where Spain ?

Dro. S. Faith, I saw it not ; but I felt it hot in her breath.

Ant. S. Where America, the Indies ?

Dro. S. Oh, sir, upon her nose, all o'er embellished with rubies, carbuncles, sapphires, declining their rich aspect to the hot breath of Spain ; who sent whole armadoes of caracks to be ballast at her nose.

Ant. S. Where stood Belgia, the Netherlands ?

Dro. S. Oh, sir, I did not look so low. To conclude, this drudge, or diviner, laid claim to me ; called me Dromio ; swore I was assured to her ; told me what priyy marks I had about me, as, the mark of my shoulder, the mole in my neck, the great wart on my left arm, that I amazed ran from her as a witch :

And, I think, if my breast had not been made of faith and my heart of steel,

150

126. *reverted*, turned back, risen in rebellion against. This alludes to the war of the League against Henry of Navarre, the heir to the throne after the death of Henry III. in 1589. Elizabeth in 1591 sent a force of 4000 men under Essex to his aid. The play upon 'hair' is

forced for the sake of the allusion ; it would have been more natural to say that the girl's unruly locks 'made war upon' her forehead.

140. *caracks*, galleons.

141. *ballast*, ballasted, loaded.

145. *assured*, engaged.

The Comedy of Errors

ACT III

She had transform'd me to a curtal dog and made
me turn i' the wheel.

Ant. S. Go hie thee presently, post to the road :
An if the wind blow any way from shore,
I will not harbour in this town to-night :
If any bark put forth, come to the mart,
Where I will walk till thou return to me.
If every one knows us and we know none,
'Tis time, I think, to trudge, pack and be gone.

Dro. S. As from a bear a man would run for life,
So fly I from her that would be my wife. [*Exit.* 160

Ant. S. There's none but witches do inhabit
here ;
And therefore 'tis high time that I were hence.
She that doth call me husband, even my soul
Doth for a wife abhor. But her fair sister,
Possess'd with such a gentle sovereign grace,
Of such enchanting presence and discourse,
Hath almost made me traitor to myself :
But, lest myself be guilty to self-wrong,
I'll stop mine ears against the mermaid's song.

Enter ANGELO with the chain.

Ang. Master Antipholus,—

Ant. S. Ay, that's my name. 170

Ang. I know it well, sir : lo, here is the chain.
I thought to have ta'en you at the Porpentine :
The chain unfinish'd made me stay thus long.

Ant. S. What is your will that I shall do with
this ?

Ang. What please yourself, sir : I have made
it for you.

151. *curtal*, with a docked spit (fixed to a wheel which the
tail. dog turned by its own weight).

152. *road*, harbour.

151. *turn i' the wheel*, turn the

168. *guilty to*, guilty of.

Ant. S. Made it for me, sir! I bespoke it not.

Ang. Not once, nor twice, but twenty times
you have.

Go home with it and please your wife withal ;

And soon at supper-time I'll visit you

And then receive my money for the chain. 180

Ant. S. I pray you, sir, receive the money now,
For fear you ne'er see chain nor money more.

Ang. You are a merry man, sir : fare you well.
[*Exit.*

Ant. S. What I should think of this, I cannot
tell :

But this I think, there's no man is so vain

That would refuse so fair an offer'd chain.

I see a man here needs not live by shifts,

When in the streets he meets such golden gifts.

I'll to the mart and there for Dromio stay :

If any ship put out, then straight away. [*Exit.* 190

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *A public place.*

Enter Second Merchant, ANGELO, and an
Officer.

Sec. Mer. You know since Pentecost the sum
is due,

And since I have not much importuned you ;

Nor now I had not, but that I am bound

To Persia and want guilders for my voyage :

Therefore make present satisfaction,

Or I'll attach you by this officer.

6. *attach*, arrest.

The Comedy of Errors

ACT IV

Ang. Even just the sum that I do owe to you
Is growing to me by Antipholus,
And in the instant that I met with you
He had of me a chain : at five o'clock
I shall receive the money for the same.
Pleaseth you walk with me down to his house,
I will discharge my bond, and thank you too.

10

*Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus and DROMIO
of Ephesus from the courtesan's.*

Off. That labour may you save : see where he
comes.

Ant. E. While I go to the goldsmith's house,
go thou

And buy a rope's end : that will I bestow
Among my wife and her confederates,
For locking me out of my doors by day.

But, soft ! I see the goldsmith. Get thee gone ;
Buy thou a rope and bring it home to me.

20

Dro. E. I buy a thousand pound a year : I
buy a rope. *[Exit.*

Ant. E. A man is well help up that trusts to
you :

I promised your presence and the chain ;
But neither chain nor goldsmith came to me.
Belike you thought our love would last too long,
If it were chain'd together, and therefore came
not.

Ang. Saving your merry humour, here's the
note

8. *growing*, accruing.

16. *bestow*, put to use.

21. *I buy a thousand pound a year: I buy a rope*, i.e. probably the vengeance which the rope procures is worth a large

income to him. This is supported by Halliwell's comparison of 3 *Henry VI.* ii. 244 :—

A wisp of straw were worth a thousand crowns
To make this shameless callet know herself.

How much your chain weighs to the utmost carat,
The fineness of the gold and chargeful fashion,
Which doth amount to three odd ducats more 30
Than I stand debted to this gentleman :
I pray you, see him presently discharged,
For he is bound to sea and stays but for it.

Ant. E. I am not furnish'd with the present
money ;
Besides, I have some business in the town.
Good signior, take the stranger to my house,
And with you take the chain, and bid my wife
Disburse the sum on the receipt thereof :
Perchance I will be there as soon as you.

Ang. Then you will bring the chain to her
yourself? 40

Ant. E. No ; bear it with you, lest I come
not time enough.

Ang. Well, sir, I will. Have you the chain
about you?

Ant. E. An if I have not, sir, I hope you have ;
Or else you may return without your money.

Ang. Nay, come, I pray you, sir, give me
the chain :

Both wind and tide stays for this gentleman,
And I, to blame, have held him here too long.

Ant. E. Good Lord ! you use this dalliance
to excuse
Your breach of promise to the Porpentine.
I should have chid you for not bringing it,
But, like a shrew, you first begin to brawl. 50

Sec. Mer. The hour steals on ; I pray you, sir,
dispatch.

Ang. You hear how he importunes me ;—the
chain !

Ant. E. Why, give it to my wife and fetch
your money.

The Comedy of Errors

ACT IV

Ang. Come, come, you know I gave it you even now.

Either send the chain or send me by some token.

Ant. E. Fie, now you run this humour out of breath,

Come, where's the chain? I pray you, let me see it.

Sec. Mer. My business cannot brook this dalliance.

Good sir, say whether you'll answer me or no: 60

If not, I'll leave him to the officer.

Ant. E. I answer you! what should I answer you?

Ang. The money that you owe me for the chain.

Ant. E. I owe you none till I receive the chain.

Ang. You know I gave it you half an hour since.

Ant. E. You gave me none: you wrong me much to say so.

Ang. You wrong me more, sir, in denying it: Consider how it stands upon my credit.

Sec. Mer. Well, officer, arrest him at my suit.

Off. I do; and charge you in the duke's name to obey me. 70

Ang. This touches me in reputation.

Either consent to pay this sum for me

Or I attach you by this officer.

Ant. E. Consent to pay thee that I never had!

Arrest me, foolish fellow, if thou darest.

Ang. Here is thy fee; arrest him, officer,

56. *Either*; monosyllabic. strength of which I may claim it

ib. *send me by some token*, myself.

give me some attestation on the 60. *whether*, pron. *whe'r*.

I would not spare my brother in this case,
If he should scorn me so apparently.

Off. I do arrest you, sir : you hear the suit.

Ant. E. I do obey thee till I give thee bail. 80

But, sirrah, you shall buy this sport as dear
As all the metal in your shop will answer.

Ang. Sir, sir, I shall have law in Ephesus,
To your notorious shame ; I doubt it not.

Enter DROMIO of Syracuse, from the bay.

Dro. S. Master, there is a bark of Epidamnum
That stays but till her owner comes aboard
And then, sir, she bears away. Our fraughtage,
sir,

I have convey'd aboard and I have bought
The oil, the balsamum and aqua-vitæ.

The ship is in her trim ; the merry wind
Blows fair from land : they stay for nought at all
But for their owner, master, and yourself. 90

Ant. E. How now ! a madman ! Why, thou
peevish sheep,
What ship of Epidamnum stays for me ?

Dro. S. A ship you sent me to, to hire waftage.

Ant. E. Thou drunken slave, I sent thee for
a rope

And told thee to what purpose and what end.

Dro. S. You sent me for a ropës end as soon :
You sent me to the bay, sir, for a bark.

Ant. E. I will debate this matter at more
leisure, 100

78. *apparently*, openly, without disguise.

90. *in her trim*, ready for sailing.

93. *peevish*, foolish.

ib. *sheep . . . ship*. Cf. note to

Love's Labour's Lost, ii. 1. 219.

95. *waftage*, passage (by water).

98. *ropës end*; the inflexion, -es (gen. and plur.), was still often sounded in early Elizabethan drama.

The Comedy of Errors

ACT IV

And teach your ears to list me with more heed.
To Adriana, villain, hie thee straight :
Give her this key, and tell her, in the desk
That's cover'd o'er with Turkish tapestry
There is a purse of ducats : let her send it :
Tell her I am arrested in the street
And that shall bail me : hie thee, slave, be gone !
On, officer, to prison till it come.

[*Exeunt Sec. Merchant, Angelo,
Officer, and Ant. E.*]

Dro. S. To Adriana ! that is where we dined,
Where Dowsabel did claim me for her husband : 110
She is too big, I hope, for me to compass.
Thither I must, although against my will,
For servants must their masters' minds fulfil.
[*Exit.*]

SCENE II. *The house of ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus.*

Enter ADRIANA and LUCIANA.

Adr. Ah, Luciana, did he tempt thee so ?
Mightst thou perceive austerely in his eye
That he did plead in earnest ? yea or no ?
Look'd he or red or pale, or sad or merrily ?
What observation madest thou in this case
Of his heart's meteors tilting in his face ?

Luc. First he denied you had in him no right.

Adr. He meant he did me none ; the more
my spite.

110. *Dowsabel*, a poetic name,
applied in jocular irony to the
kitchenmaid 'Nell.'

1. *tempt*, attempt.

2. *austerely*, by a serious

expression.

6. *his heart's meteors tilting
in his face* ; probably with an
allusion to the flushing and
contending colours of the aurora
borealis.

Luc. Then swore he that he was a stranger here.

Adr. And true he swore, though yet forsworn he were.

10

Luc. Then pleaded I for you.

Adr. And what said he?

Luc. That love I begg'd for you he begg'd of me.

Adr. With what persuasion did he tempt thy love?

Luc. With words that in an honest suit might move.

First he did praise my beauty, then my speech.

Adr. Didst speak him fair?

Luc. Have patience, I beseech.

Adr. I cannot, nor I will not, hold me still ;
My tongue, though not my heart, shall have his will.

He is deformed, crooked, old and sere,
Ill-faced, worse bodied, shapeless everywhere ;
Vicious, ungentle, foolish, blunt, unkind,
Stigmatical in making, worse in mind.

20

Luc. Who would be jealous then of such a one ?
No evil lost is wail'd when it is gone.

Adr. Ah, but I think him better than I say,
And yet would herein others' eyes were worse.
Far from her nest the lapwing cries away :
My heart prays for him, though my tongue do curse.

Enter DROMIO of Syracuse.

Dro. S. Here ! go ; the desk, the purse !
sweet, now, make haste.

The Comedy of Errors

ACT IV

Luc. How hast thou lost thy breath?

Dro. S. By running fast. 30

Adr. Where is thy master, Dromio? is he well?

Dro. S. No, he's in Tartar limbo, worse than hell.

A devil in an everlasting garment hath him;
One whose hard heart is button'd up with steel;
A fiend, a fairy, pitiless and rough;
A wolf, nay, worse, a fellow all in buff;
A back-friend, a shoulder-clapper, one that countermands

The passages of alleys, creeks and narrow lands;
A hound that runs counter and yet draws dry-foot well;

One that before the Judgement carries poor souls to hell. 40

Adr. Why, man, what is the matter?

32. *Tartar limbo*, prison. 'Limbo,' properly an outer region of hell, so, like 'Tartar' ('Tartarus'), hell itself, was thence jocularly applied to a prison.

33. *A devil*, etc., a sergeant in a buff jerkin; this 'robe of durance' being familiarly known as an 'everlasting garment.'

35. *fairy*; most modern edd. alter to *fury*, but Shakespeare's allusions to fairy malignity are distinct, especially *Ham.* i. 1. 163, 'then . . . no fairy takes' (*i.e.* afflicts with any disease or disablement). Cf. ii. 2. 191, too, above.

37. *back-friend*, a secret enemy; hence applied to the bailiff who comes from behind to arrest one.

37. *countermands the passages*, prevents the passage.

39. *runs counter*, pursues a false scent or follows the trail backward. There is a play upon the name of the Counter prison. The sergeant of the Counter follows his game successfully, yet runs 'counter' in so far as he pursues them thither.

39. *draws dry-foot*, tracks by the scent of the foot.

40. *that before the Judgement*, etc., who confines his prisoners before trial in the worst cells of the prison (known as *hell*). A more technical reference, which has been suggested, to arrest by 'mesne process' or 'on a side issue, before judgment on the main suit is pronounced,' seems far-fetched.

The Comedy of Errors

Dro. S. I do not know the matter: he is
'rested on the case.

Adr. What, is he arrested? Tell me at whose
suit.

Dro. S. I know not at whose suit he is ar-
rested well;

But he's in a suit of buff which 'rested him, that
can I tell.

Will you send him, mistress, redemption, the
money in his desk?

Adr. Go fetch it, sister. [*Exit Luciana.*]
This I wonder at,

That he, unknown to me, should be in debt.

Tell me, was he arrested on a band?

Dro. S. Not on a band, but on a stronger
thing;

50

A chain, a chain! Do you not hear it ring?

Adr. What, the chain?

Dro. S. No, no, the bell: 'tis time that I were
gone:

It was two ere I left him, and now the clock
strikes one.

Adr. The hours come back! that did I never
hear.

Dro. S. O, yes; if any hour meet a sergeant,
a' turns back for very fear.

Adr. As if Time were in debt! how fondly
dost thou reason!

42. '*rested on the case*. Dromio plays on the contrast of 'matter' and 'case' as 'contents' and 'form'; but *matter* is primarily the 'cause at issue,' 'change,' and *to arrest on the case* probably also refers to the legal phrase 'an action on the case,' explained to mean 'a general action for

the redress of a wrong . . . not specially provided for by law.'—Grey.

49. *band*, bond, with a quibble on 'band' = neckcloth. In iii. 31 below, there is a similar quibble between *band* = *bond* and *band* = 'company.'

The Comedy of Errors

ACT IV

Dro. S. Time is a very bankrupt and owes more than he's worth to season.

Nay, he's a thief too: have you not heard men say,

That Time comes stealing on by night and day? 60
If he be in debt and theft, and a sergeant in the way,

Hath he not reason to turn back an hour in a day?

Re-enter LUCIANA with a purse.

Adr. Go, Dromio; there's the money, bear it straight,

And bring thy master home immediately.

Come, sister: I am press'd down with conceit—

Conceit, my comfort and my injury. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. *A public place.*

Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse.

Ant. S. There's not a man I meet but doth salute me

As if I were their well-acquainted friend;

And every one doth call me by my name.

Some tender money to me; some invite me;

Some other give me thanks for kindnesses;

Some offer me commodities to buy:

Even now a tailor call'd me in his shop

And show'd me silks that he had bought for me

And therewithal took measure of my body.

58. *Time . . . owes more than he's worth to season*, all that Time produces in any season falls short of what is 'seasonable,' i.e. would be convenient for us.

61. *If he be*; Ff have *If I be*. Dyce supposed *I* to be a misprint for *T*, the initial of *Time*.

65. *conceit*, apprehension.

Sure, these are but imaginary wiles
And Lapland sorcerers inhabit here.

10

Enter DROMIO of Syracuse.

Dro. S. Master, here's the gold you sent me for. What, have you got the picture of old Adam new-apparelled?

Ant. S. What gold is this? what Adam dost thou mean?

Dro. S. Not that Adam that kept the Paradise, but that Adam that keeps the prison: he that goes in the calf's skin that was killed for the Prodigal; he that came behind you, sir, like an evil angel, and bid you forsake your liberty.

20

Ant. S. I understand thee not.

Dro. S. No? why, 'tis a plain case: he that went, like a bass-viol, in a case of leather; the man, sir, that, when gentlemen are tired, gives them a fo' and 'rests them; he, sir, that takes

11. *Lapland sorcerers.* Lapland was the subject of much Elizabethan legend. Fletcher in *The Chances* relates that they there 'sell men winds for dead drinks and old doublets'; Milton refers to 'Lapland witches,' Marlowe to 'Lapland giants.'

13. *What, have you got the picture of old Adam new apparelled?* 'Have you got rid of the officer?' This is doubtless the purport of the question, but its exact force remains obscure. Three chief explanations have been given: (1) *what have you got* may be a colloquialism for 'what have you done with?' (2) the words *rid of* have fallen

out after *got*; (3) *got*=had; 'have you had old Adam new apparelled,' *i.e.* procured him a new suit, *i.e.* got rid of him. Both (1) and (3) require the assignment of purely conjectural meanings; while style is decidedly in favour of (3) or (2) as against (1); for Dromio's *what* of surprise can scarcely be dispensed with. For the present then (2) remains the least unsatisfactory. In any case the officer is called 'the picture of old Adam' because he was 'in buff' (this being also an old dialectal phrase for 'naked').

25. *foh*, tap; F₁ *sob*, an easy misprint.

The Comedy of Errors

ACT IV

pity on decayed men and gives them suits of durance; he that sets up his rest to do more exploits with his mace than a morris-pike.

Ant. S. What, thou meanest an officer?

Dro. S. Ay, sir, the sergeant of the band; he that brings any man to answer it that breaks his band; one that thinks a man always going to bed and says 'God give you good rest!'

Ant. S. Well, sir, there rest in your foolery. Is there any ship puts forth to-night? may we be gone?

Dro. S. Why, sir, I brought you word an hour since that the bark Expedition put forth to-night; and then were you hindered by the sergeant, to tarry for the hoy Delay. Here are the angels that you sent for to deliver you.

Ant. S. The fellow is distract, and so am I; And here we wander in illusions: Some blessed power deliver us from hence!

Enter a Courtezan.

Cour. Well met, well met, Master Antipholus.

I see, sir, you have found the goldsmith now: Is that the chain you promised me to-day?

Ant. S. Satan, avoid! I charge thee, tempt me not.

Dro. S. Master, is this Mistress Satan?

Ant. S. It is the devil.

Dro. S. Nay, she is worse, she is the devil's

26. *suits of durance*, (1) robes of lasting stuff, (2) prison-dress.

27. *sets up his rest*, stakes his all upon an event (in cards); used of one who commits himself unreservedly to a course.

28. *morris-pike*, Moorish-pike.

33. *rest*; for 'rest, arrest.

41. *angels*; the English coin called *angel* was worth about ten shillings.

dam; and here she comes in the habit of a light wench; and thereof comes that the wenches say 'God damn me;' that's as much to say 'God make me a light wench.' It is written, they appear to men like angels of light: light is an effect of fire, and fire will burn; ergo, light wenches will burn. Come not near her.

Cour. Your man and you are marvellous merry, sir.

Will you go with me? We'll mend our dinner here?

60

Dro. S. Master, if you do, expect spoon-meat; or bespeak a long spoon.

Ant. S. Why, Dromio?

Dro. S. Marry, he must have a long spoon that must eat with the devil.

Ant. S. Avoid then, fiend! what tell'st thou me of supping?

Thou art, as you are all, a sorceress:

I conjure thee to leave me and be gone.

Cour. Give me the ring of mine you had at dinner,

Or, for my diamond, the chain you promised,

70

And I'll be gone, sir, and not trouble you.

Dro. S. Some devils ask but the parings of one's nail,

A rush, a hair, a drop of blood, a pin,

A nut, a cherry-stone;

But she, more covetous, would have a chain.

Master, be wise: an if you give it her,

The devil will shake her chain and fright us with it.

60. *we'll mend our dinner,* buy additional food.

73. *a drop of blood*; probably an allusion to Faustus' signature of the bond in his blood. Mar-

lowe's *Dr. Faustus* had been written a year or more before this Comedy, and the English version of the *Faustbuch* (reprinted 1592) may also already have appeared.

The Comedy of Errors

ACT IV

Cour. I pray you, sir, my ring, or else the chain :

I hope you do not mean to cheat me so.

Ant. S. Avaunt, thou witch ! Come, Dromio, let us go. 80

Dro. S. 'Fly pride,' says the peacock : mistress, that you know.

[*Exeunt Ant. S. and Dro. S.*]

Cour. Now, out of doubt Antipholus is mad, Else would he never so demean himself.

A ring he hath of mine worth forty ducats,

And for the same he promised me a chain :

Both one and other he denies me now.

The reason that I gather he is mad,

Besides this present instance of his rage,

Is a mad tale he told to-day at dinner,

Of his own doors being shut against his entrance. 90

Belike his wife, acquainted with his fits,

On purpose shut the doors against his way.

My way is now to hie home to his house,

And tell his wife that, being lunatic,

He rush'd into my house and took perforce

My ring away. This course I fittest choose ;

For forty ducats is too much to lose. [*Exit.*]

SCENE IV. *A street.*

Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus and the Officer.

Ant. E. Fear me not, man ; I will not break away :

I'll give thee, ere I leave thee, so much money,

To warrant thee, as I am 'rested for.

My wife is in a wayward mood to-day,

88. *instance*, indication.

And will not lightly trust the messenger.
That I should be attach'd in Ephesus,
I tell you, 'twill sound harshly in her ears.

Enter DROMIO of Ephesus with a rope's-end.

Here comes my man; I think he brings the money.

How now, sir! have you that I sent you for?

Dro. E. Here's that, I warrant you, will pay them all. 10

Ant. E. But where's the money?

Dro. E. Why, sir, I gave the money for the rope.

Ant. E. Five hundred ducats, villain, for a rope?

Dro. E. I'll serve you, sir, five hundred at the rate.

Ant. E. To what end did I bid thee hie thee home?

Dro. E. To a rope's-end, sir; and to that end am I returned.

Ant. E. And to that end, sir, I will welcome you. [Beating him.]

Off. Good sir, be patient.

Dro. E. Nay, 'tis for me to be patient; I am 20
in adversity.

Off. Good now, hold thy tongue.

Dro. E. Nay, rather persuade him to hold his hands.

Ant. E. Thou whoreson, senseless villain!

Dro. E. I would I were senseless, sir, that I might not feel your blows.

Ant. E. Thou art sensible in nothing but blows, and so is an ass.

Dro. E. I am an ass, indeed; you may prove 30

it by my long ears. I have served him from the hour of my nativity to this instant, and have nothing at his hands for my service but blows. When I am cold, he heats me with beating; when I am warm, he cools me with beating: I am waked with it when I sleep; raised with it when I sit; driven out of doors with it when I go from home; welcomed home with it when I return: nay, I bear it on my shoulders, as a beggar wont her brat; and, I think, when he hath lamed me, I shall beg with it from door to door. 40

Ant. E. Come, go along; my wife is coming yonder.

*Enter ADRIANA, LUCIANA, the Courtezan,
and PINCH.*

Dro. E. Mistress, 'respice finem,' respect your end; or rather, the prophecy like the parrot, 'beware the rope's-end.'

Ant. E. Wilt thou still talk? [*Beating him.*

Cour. How say you now? is not your husband mad?

Adr. His incivility confirms no less.

Good Doctor Pinch, you are a conjurer;

Establish him in his true sense again,

And I will please you what you will demand. 50

Luc. Alas, how fiery and how sharp he looks!

40. *wont*, is wont (to bear).

45. *the prophecy like the parrot*; alluding to the custom of teaching objurgatory phrases, among others 'Rope,' to parrots. *To* should probably be read for the first *the*; and it is just possible that, as the Camb. edd. think,

the whole phrase conceals *prospice funem*, which Dromio's following words aptly render. 'Respice funem' was a current scholar's jest for 'respice finem.' But this is somewhat academic for Dromio.

52. *please*, pay.

Cour. Mark how he trembles in his ecstasy!

Pinch. Give me your hand and let me feel your pulse.

Ant. E. There is my hand, and let it feel your ear. [Striking him.]

Pinch. I charge thee, Satan, housed within this man,

To yield possession to my holy prayers
And to thy state of darkness hie thee straight :
I conjure thee by all the saints in heaven!—

60

Ant. E. Peace, doting wizard, peace! I am not mad.

Adr. O, that thou wert not, poor distressed soul!

Ant. E. You minion, you, are these your customers?

Did this companion with the saffron face
Revel and feast it at my house to-day,
Whilst upon me the guilty doors were shut
And I denied to enter in my house?

Adr. O husband, God doth know you dined at home ;

Where would you had remain'd until this time,
Free from these slanders and this open shame!

70

Ant. E. Dined at home! Thou villain, what sayest thou?

Dro. E. Sir, sooth to say, you did not dine at home.

Ant. E. Were not my doors lock'd up and I shut out?

Dro. E. Perdie, your doors were lock'd and you shut out.

Ant. E. And did not she herself revile me there?

54. *ecstasy*, madness ; trembling was one of the reputed signs of 'possession.'

The Comedy of Errors

ACT IV

Dro. E. Sans fable, she herself reviled you there.

Ant. E. Did not her kitchen-maid rail, taunt and scorn me?

Dro. E. Certes, she did; the kitchen-vestal scorn'd you.

Ant. E. And did not I in rage depart from thence?

Dro. E. In verity you did; my bones bear witness,

80

That since have felt the vigour of his rage.

Adr. Is't good to soothe him in these contraries?

Pinch. It is no shame: the fellow finds his vein And yielding to him humours well his frenzy.

Ant. E. Thou hast suborn'd the goldsmith to arrest me.

Adr. Alas, I sent you money to redeem you, By Dromio here, who came in haste for it.

Dro. E. Money by me! heart and good-will you might;

But surely, master, not a rag of money.

Ant. E. Went'st not thou to her for a purse of ducats?

90

Adr. He came to me and I deliver'd it.

Luc. And I am witness with her that she did.

Dro. E. God and the rope-maker bear me witness

That I was sent for nothing but a rope!

Pinch. Mistress, both man and master is possess'd;

I know it by their pale and deadly looks:

They must be bound and laid in some dark room.

Ant. E. Say, wherefore didst thou lock me forth to-day?

And why dost thou deny the bag of gold?

Adr. I did not, gentle husband, lock thee
forth. 100

Dro. E. And, gentle master, I received no
gold ;

But I confess, sir, that we weré lock'd out.

Adr. Dissembling villain, thou speak'st false
in both.

Ant. E. Dissembling harlot, thou art false in all
And art confederate with a damned pack
To make a loathsome abject scorn of me :
But with these nails I'll pluck out these false eyes
That would behold in me this shameful sport.

*Enter three or four, and offer to bind him. He
strives.*

Adr. O, bind him, bind him ! let him not
come near me.

Pinch. More company ! The fiend is strong
within him. 110

Luc. Ay me, poor man, how pale and wan he
looks !

Ant. E. What, will you murder me ? Thou
gaoler, thou,
I am thy prisoner : wilt thou suffer them
To make a rescue ?

Off. Masters, let him go :
He is my prisoner, and you shall not have him.

Pinch. Go bind this man, for he is frantic too.
[*They offer to bind Dro. E.*

Adr. What wilt thou do, thou peevish officer ?
Hast thou delight to see a wretched man
Do outrage and displeasure to himself ?

Off. He is my prisoner : if I let him go, 120
The debt he owes will be required of me.

Adr. I will discharge thee ere I go from thee :
Bear me forthwith unto his creditor

The Comedy of Errors

ACT IV

And, knowing how the debt grows, I will pay it.
Good master doctor, see him safe convey'd
Home to my house. O most unhappy day !

Ant. E. O most unhappy strumpet !

Dro. E. Master, I am here enter'd in bond
for you.

Ant. E. Out on thee, villain ! wherefore dost
thou mad me ?

Dro. E. Will you be bound for nothing ? be ¹³⁰
mad, good master : cry ' The devil ! '

Luc. God help, poor souls, how idly do they
talk !

Adr. Go bear him hence. Sister, go you with
me. [*Exeunt all but Adriana, Luciana,*
Officer and Courtezan.

Say now, whose suit is he arrested at ?

Off. One Angelo, a goldsmith : do you know
him ?

Adr. I know the man. What is the sum he
owes ?

Off. Two hundred ducats.

Adr. Say, how grows it due ?

Off. Due for a chain your husband had of him.

Adr. He did bespeak a chain for me, but had
it not.

Cour. When as your husband all in rage to-day ¹⁴⁰
Came to my house and took away my ring—
The ring I saw upon his finger now—
Straight after did I meet him with a chain.

Adr. It may be so, but I did never see it.
Come, gaoler, bring me where the goldsmith is :
I long to know the truth hereof at large.

*Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse with his rapier
drawn, and DROMIO of Syracuse.*

Luc. God, for thy mercy ! they are loose again.

Adr. And come with naked swords.

Let's call more help to have them bound again.

Off. Away! they'll kill us.

150

[*Exeunt all but Ant. S. and Dro. S.*]

Ant. S. I see these witches are afraid of swords.

Dro. S. She that would be your wife now ran from you.

Ant. S. Come to the Centaur; fetch our stuff from thence:

I long that we were safe and sound aboard.

Dro. S. Faith, stay here this night; they will surely do us no harm: you saw they speak us fair, give us gold: methinks they are such a gentle nation that, but for the mountain of mad flesh that claims marriage of me, I could find in my heart to stay here still and turn witch.

160

Ant. S. I will not stay to-night for all the town;

Therefore away, to get our stuff aboard.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT V.

SCENE I. *A street before a Priory.*

Enter ~~the~~ *MERCHANT and ANGELO.*

Ang. I am sorry, sir, that I have hinder'd you;
But, I protest, he had the chain of me,
Though most dishonestly he doth deny it.

Sec. Mer. How is the man esteem'd here in the city?

Ang. Of very reverend reputation, sir,

153. *stuff*, baggage.

The Comedy of Errors

ACT V

Of credit infinite, highly beloved,
Second to none that lives here in the city :
His word might bear my wealth at any time.

Sec. Mer. Speak softly : yonder, as I think, he
walks.

Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse *and* DROMIO
of Syracuse.

Ang. 'Tis so ; and that self chain about his
neck

10

Which he forswore most monstrously to have.
Good sir, draw near to me, I'll speak to him.
Signior Antipholus, I wonder much
That you would put me to this shame and trouble ;
And, not without some scandal to yourself,
With circumstance and oaths so to deny
This chain which now you wear so openly :
Beside the charge, the shame, imprisonment,
You have done wrong to this my honest friend,
Who, but for staying on our controversy,
Had hoisted sail and put to sea to-day :
This chain you had of me ; can you deny it ?

20

Ant. S. I think I had ; I never did deny it.

Sec. Mer. Yes, that you did, sir, and forswore
it too.

Ant. S. Who heard me to deny it or forswear it ?

Sec. Mer. These ears of mine, thou know'st,
did hear thee.

Fie on thee, wretch ! 'tis pity that thou livest
To walk where any honest men resort.

Ant. S. Thou art a villain to impeach me thus :
I'll prove mine honour and mine honesty

30

8. *His word might bear my*
wealth, he could get as much on
credit as I possess.

10. *self*, same.

16. *circumstance*, detailed,
explicit statements.

26. *hear* ; dissyllabic.

Against thee presently, if thou darest stand.

Sec. Mer. I dare, and do defy thee for a villain.
[*They draw.*]

Enter ADRIANA, LUCIANA, the Courtezan, and others.

Adr. Hold, hurt him not, for God's sake! he is mad,
Some get within him, take his sword away;
Bind Dromio too, and bear them to my house.

Dro. S. Run, master, run; for God's sake take a house!
This is some priory. In, or we are spoil'd!
[*Exeunt Ant. S. and Dro. S. to the Priory.*]

Enter the Lady Abbess.

Abb. Be quiet, people. Wherefore throng you hither.

Adr. To fetch my poor distracted husband hence.

Let us come in, that we may bind him fast
And bear him home for his recovery.

Ang. I knew he was not in his perfect wits.

Sec. Mer. I am sorry now that I did draw on him.

Abb. How long hath this possession held the man?

Adr. This week he hath been heavy, sour, sad,
And much different from the man he was:
But till this afternoon his passion
Ne'er brake into extremity of rage.

Abb. Hath he not lost much wealth by wreck of sea?

31. *presently*, forthwith.

34. *get within*, get at close quarters with, close with.

36. *take*, take to.

49. *wreck of sea*, destruction wrought by the sea.

The Comedy of Errors

ACT V

Buried some dear friend? Hath not else his eye 50
Stray'd his affection in unlawful love?

A sin prevailing much in youthful men,
Who give their eyes the liberty of gazing.
Which of these sorrows is he subject to?

Adr. To none of these, except it be the last;
Namely, some love that drew him oft from home.

Abb. You should for that have reprehended him.

Adr. Why, so I did.

Abb. Ay, but not rough enough.

Adr. As roughly as my modesty would let me.

Abb. Haply, in private.

Adr. And in assemblies too. 60

Abb. Ay, but not enough.

Adr. It was the copy of our conference;
In bed he slept not for my urging it;
At board he fed not for my urging it;
Alone, it was the subject of my theme;
In company I often glanced it;
Still did I tell him it was vile and bad.

Abb. And thereof came it that the man was
mad:

The venom clamours of a jealous woman
Poisons more deadly than a mad dog's tooth. 70
It seems his sleeps were hinder'd by thy railing,
And thereof comes it that his head is light.
Thou say'st his meat was sauced with thy up-
braidings:

Unquiet meals make ill digestions;
Thereof the raging fire of fever bred;
And what's a fever but a fit of madness?
Thou say'st his sports were hinder'd by thy brawls:
Sweet recreation barr'd, what doth ensue
But moody and dull melancholy,

51. *stray'd*, misled.

theme of our conversation.

62. *copy of our conference*,

66. *glanced*, glanced at.

Kinsman to grim and comfortless despair, 80
 And at her heels a huge infectious troop
 Of pale distemperatures and foes to life?
 In food, in sport and life-preserving rest
 To be disturb'd, would mad or man or beast :
 The consequence is then thy jealous fits
 Have scared thy husband from the use of wits.

Luc. She never reprehended him but mildly,
 When he demean'd himself rough, rude and wildly.
 Why bear you these rebukes and answer not?

Adr. She did betray me to my own reproof. 90
 Good people, enter and lay hold on him.

Abb. No, not a creature enters in my house.

Adr. Then let your servants bring my husband
 forth.

Abb. Neither: he took this place for sanctuary,
 And it shall privilege him from your hands
 Till I have brought him to his wits again,
 Or lose my labour in assaying it.

Adr. I will attend my husband, be his nurse,
 Diet his sickness, for it is my office,
 And will have no attorney but myself; 100
 And therefore let me have him home with me.

Abb. Be patient; for I will not let him stir
 Till I have used the approved means I have,
 With wholesome syrups, drugs and holy prayers,
 To make of him a formal man again :
 It is a branch and parcel of mine oath,
 A charitable duty of my order.

Therefore depart and leave him here with me.

Adr. I will not hence and leave my husband
 here :

And ill it doth beseem your holiness 110

82. *distemperatures*, dis-
 orders.

100. *attorney*, substitute.

105. *formal*, normal.

106. *parcel*, part.

The Comedy of Errors

ACT V

To separate the husband and the wife.

Abb. Be quiet and depart : thou shalt not have him. [Exit.

Luc. Complain unto the duke of this indignity.

Adr. Come, go : I will fall prostrate at his feet
And never rise until my tears and prayers
Have won his grace to come in person hither
And take perforce my husband from the abbess.

Sec. Mer. By this, I think, the dial points at five :

Anon, I'm sure, the duke himself in person
Comes this way to the melancholy vale,
The place of death and sorry execution,
Behind the ditches of the abbey here.

120

Ang. Upon what cause?

Sec. Mer. To see a reverend Syracusian
merchant,
Who put unluckily into this bay
Against the laws and statutes of this town,
Beheaded publicly for his offence.

Ang. See where they come : we will behold
his death.

Luc. Kneel to the duke before he pass the
abbey.

*Enter DUKE, attended ; ÆGEON bareheaded ;
with the Headsman and other Officers.*

Duke. Yet once again proclaim it publicly,
If any friend will pay the sum for him,
He shall not die ; so much we tender him.

130

Adr. Justice, most sacred duke, against the
abbess !

Duke. She is a virtuous and a reverend lady :
It cannot be that she hath done thee wrong.

121. *sorry*, piteous.

132. *tender*, have regard for.

Adr. May it please your grace, Antipholus
 my husband,
 Whom I made lord of me and all I had,
 At your important letters,—this ill day
 A most outrageous fit of madness took him ;
 That desperately he hurried through the street,— 140
 With him his bondman, all as mad as he,—
 Doing displeasure to the citizens
 By rushing in their houses, bearing thence
 Rings, jewels, any thing his rage did like.
 Once did I get him bound and sent him home,
 Whilst to take order for the wrongs I went
 That here and there his fury had committed.
 Anon, I wot not by what strong escape,
 He broke from those that had the guard of
 him ;
 And with his mad attendant and himself, 150
 Each one with ireful passion, with drawn swords,
 Met us again and madly bent on us
 Chased us away, till raising of more aid
 We came again to bind them. Then they fled
 Into this abbey, whither we pursued them :
 And here the abbess shuts the gates on us
 And will not suffer us to fetch him out,
 Nor send him forth that we may bear him hence.
 Therefore, most gracious duke, with thy com-
 mand
 Let him be brought forth and borne hence for help. 160
Duke. Long since thy husband served me in
 my wars,
 And I to thee engaged a prince's word,
 When thou didst make him master of thy bed,
 To do him all the grace and good I could.
 Go, some of you, knock at the abbey-gate

138. *important*, importunate. measures to remedy.146. *take order for*, take 148. *strong*, forcibly effected.

The Comedy of Errors

ACT V

And bid the lady abbess come to me.
I will determine this before I stir.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. O mistress, mistress, shift and save yourself!

My master and his man are both broke loose,
Beaten the maids a-row and bound the doctor, 170
Whose beard they have singed off with brands
of fire;

And ever, as it blazed, they threw on him
Great pails of puddled mire to quench the hair:
My master preaches patience to him and the
while

His man with scissors nicks him like a fool,
And sure, unless you send some present help,
Between them they will kill the conjurer.

Adr. Peace, fool! thy master and his man are
here,

And that is false thou dost report to us.

Serv. Mistress, upon my life, I tell you true; 180
I have not breathed almost since I did see it.
He cries for you and vows, if he can take you,
To scorch your face and to disfigure you.

[*Cry within.*

Hark, hark! I hear him, mistress: fly, be gone!

Duke. Come, stand by me; fear nothing. Guard
with halberds!

Adr. Ay me, it is my husband! Witness you,
That he is borne about invisible:
Even now we housed him in the abbey here;
And now he's there, past thought of human reason.

170. *a-row*, one after the other. head being commonly close-
175. *nicks*, clips; the fool's shaven.

The Comedy of Errors

Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus *and* DROMIO of Ephesus.

Ant. E. Justice, most gracious duke, O, grant me justice !

190

Even for the service that long since I did thee,
When I bestrid thee in the wars and took
Deep scars to save thy life ; even for the blood
That then I lost for thee, now grant me justice.

Æge. Unless the fear of death doth make me
dote,
I see my son Antipholus and Dromio.

Ant. E. Justice, sweet prince, against that
woman there !

She whom thou gavest to me to be my wife,
That hath abused and dishonour'd me
Even in the strength and height of injury !
Beyond imagination is the wrong

200

That she this day hath shameless thrown on me.

Duke. Discover how, and thou shalt find me
just.

Ant. E. This day, great duke, she shut the
doors upon me,
While she with harlots feasted in my house.

Duke. A grievous fault ! Say, woman, didst
thou so ?

Adr. No, my good lord : myself, he and my
sister

To-day did dine together. So befall my soul
As this is false he burdens me withal !

Luc. Ne'er may I look on day, nor sleep on
night,

210

But she tells to your highness simple truth !

192. *bestrid*, defended
(when the duke had fallen in
battle).

203. *discover*, disclose.

205. *harlots*, lewd fellows.

The Comedy of Errors

ACT V

Ang. O perjured woman! They are both
forsworn:

In this the madman justly chargeth them.

Ant. E. My liege, I am advised what I say,
Neither disturbed with the effect of wine,
Nor heady-rash, provoked with raging ire,
Albeit my wrongs might make one wiser mad.
This woman lock'd me out this day from dinner
That goldsmith there, were he not pack'd with her,
Could witness it, for he was with me then;
Who parted with me to go fetch a chain,
Promising to bring it to the Porpentine,
Where Balthazar and I did dine together.
Our dinner done, and he not coming thither,
I went to seek him: in the street I met him
And in his company that gentleman.

220

There did this perjured goldsmith swear me down
That I this day of him received the chain,
Which, God he knows, I saw not: for the which
He did arrest me with an officer.

230

I did obey, and sent my peasant home
For certain ducats: he with none return'd.
Then fairly I bespoke the officer
To go in person with me to my house.
By the way we met
My wife, her sister, and a rabble more
Of vile confederates. Along with them
They brought one Pinch, a hungry lean-faced
villain,

A mere anatomy, a mountebank,
A threadbare juggler and a fortune-teller,
A needy, hollow-eyed, sharp-looking wretch,
A living-dead man: this pernicious slave,
Forsooth, took on him as a conjurer,

240

214. *I am advised what I say*, I speak deliberately.

238. *anatomy*, skeleton.

And, gazing in mine eyes, feeling my pulse,
 And with no face, as 'twere, outfacing me,
 Cries out, I was possess'd. Then all together
 They fell upon me, bound me, bore me thence
 And in a dark and dankish vault at home
 There left me and my man, both bound together;
 Till, gnawing with my teeth my bonds in sunder,
 I gain'd my freedom and immediately 250
 Ran hither to your grace; whom I beseech
 To give me ample satisfaction
 For these deep shames and great indignities.

Ang. My lord, in truth, thus far I witness with
 him,
 That he dined not at home, but was lock'd out.

Duke. But had he such a chain of thee or no?

Ang. He had, my lord: and when he ran in
 here,

These people saw the chain about his neck.

Sec. Mer. Besides, I will be sworn these ears
 of mine

Heard you confess you had the chain of him 260
 After you first forswore it on the mart:
 And thereupon I drew my sword on you;
 And then you fled into this abbey here,
 From whence, I think, you are come by miracle.

Ant. E. I never came within these abbey-
 walls,

Nor ever didst thou draw thy sword on me:
 I never saw the chain, so help me Heaven!
 And this is false you burden me withal.

Duke. Why, what an intricate impeach is this!
 I think you all have drunk of Circe's cup. 270
 If here you housed him, here he would have
 been;

If he were mad, he would not plead so coldly:

269. *impeach*, charge, accusation.

The Comedy of Errors

ACT V

You say he dined at home ; the goldsmith here
Denies that saying. Sirrah, what say you ?

Dro. E. Sir, he dined with her there, at the
Porpentine.

Cour. He did, and from my finger snatch'd
that ring.

Ant. E. 'Tis true, my liege ; this ring I had
of her.

Duke. Saw'st thou him enter at the abbey
here ?

Cour. As sure, my liege, as I do see your
grace.

Duke. Why, this is strange. Go call the
abbess hither.

280

I think you are all mated or stark mad.

[*Exit one to the Abbess.*]

Æge. Most mighty duke, vouchsafe me speak
a word :

Haply I see a friend will save my life
And pay the sum that may deliver me.

Duke. Speak freely, Syracusian, what thou
wilt.

Æge. Is not your name, sir, call'd Anti-
pholus ?

And is not that your bondman, Dromio ?

Dro. E. Within this hour I was his bondman,
sir,

But he, I thank him, gnaw'd in two my cords :
Now am I Dromio and his man unbound.

290

Æge. I am sure you both of you remember
me.

Dro. E. Ourselves we do remember, sir, by
you :

For lately we were bound, as you are now
You are not Pinch's patient, are you, sir ?

281. *mated*, confounded.

Æge. Why look you strange on me? you know me well.

Ant. E. I never saw you in my life till now.

Æge. O, grief hath changed me since you saw me last,

And careful hours with time's deformed hand

Have written strange defeatures in my face:

But tell me yet, dost thou not know my voice? 300

Ant. E. Neither.

Æge. Dromio, nor thou?

Dro. E. No, trust me, sir, nor I.

Æge. I am sure thou dost.

Dro. E. Ay, sir, but I am sure I do not; and whatsoever a man denies, you are now bound to believe him.

Æge. Not know my voice! O time's extremity,

Hast thou so crack'd and splitted my poor tongue

In seven short years, that here my only son

Knows not my feeble key of untuned cares? 310

Though now this grained face of mine be hid

In sap-consuming winter's drizzled snow

And all the conduits of my blood froze up,

Yet hath my night of life some memory,

My wasting lamps some fading glimmer left,

My dull deaf ears a little use to hear:

All these old witnesses—I cannot err—

Tell me thou art my son Antipholus.

Ant. E. I never saw my father in my life.

Æge. But seven years since, in Syracuse, boy, 320

298. *careful*, sorrowful.

ib. *deformed*, deforming.

299. *defeatures*, disfigurements.

310. *my feeble key of untuned*

cares, the faint notes in which I utter my discordant grief.

311. *grained*, furrowed, lined (as with the grain of wood).

316. *a little use to hear*, still some practice in hearing.

The Comedy of Errors

ACT V

Thou know'st we parted : but perhaps, my son,
Thou shamest to acknowledge me in misery.

Ant. E. The duke and all that know me in
the city

Can witness with me that it is not so :

I ne'er saw Syracuse in my life.

Duke. I tell thee, Syracusan, twenty years
Have I been patron to Antipholus,
During which time he ne'er saw Syracuse :
I see thy age and dangers make thee dote.

Re-enter Abbess, *with* ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse
and DROMIO of Syracuse.

Abb. Most mighty duke, behold a man much
wrong'd. *[All gather to see them. 330]*

Adr. I see two husbands, or mine eyes de-
ceive me.

Duke. One of these men is Genius to the
other ;

And so of these. Which is the natural man,
And which the spirit ? who deciphers them ?

Dro. S. I, sir, am Dromio : command him
away.

Dro. E. I, sir, am Dromio : pray, let me
stay.

Ant. S. Ægeon art thou not ? or else his
ghost ?

Dro. S. O, my old master ! who hath bound
him here ?

Abb. Whoever bound him, I will loose his
bonds

And gain a husband by his liberty.

Speak, old Ægeon, if thou be'st the man
That hadst a wife once call'd Æmilia

340

That bore thee at a burden two fair sons :
 O, if thou be'st the same Ægeon, speak,
 And speak unto the same Æmilia !

Æge. If I dream not, thou art Æmilia :
 If thou art she, tell me where is that son
 That floated with thee on the fatal raft ?

Abb. By men of Epidamnum he and I
 And the twin Dromio all were taken up ;
 But by and by rude fishermen of Corinth
 By force took Dromio and my son from them
 And me they left with those of Epidamnum.
 What then became of them I cannot tell ;
 I to this fortune that you see me in.

350

Duke. Why, here begins his morning story
 right :

These two Antipholuses, these two so like,
 And these two Dromios, one in semblance,—
 Besides her urging of her wreck at sea,—
 These are the parents to these children,
 Which accidentally are met together.

360

Antipholus, thou camest from Corinth first ?

Ant. S. No, sir, not I ; I came from Syracuse.

Duke. Stay, stand apart ; I know not which
 is which.

Ant. E. I came from Corinth, my most gra-
 cious lord,—

Dro. E. And I with him.

Ant. E. Brought to this town by that most
 famous warrior,

Duke Menaphon, your most renowned uncle.

Adr. Which of you two did dine with me to-
 day ?

Ant. S. I, gentle mistress.

Adr. And are not you my husband ? 370

Ant. E. No ; I say nay to that.

358. *semblance* ; trisyllabic.360. *children* ; trisyllabic.

The Comedy of Errors

ACT V

Ant. S. And so do I ; yet did she call me so :
And this fair gentlewoman, her sister here,
Did call me brother. [*To Luc.*] What I told
you then,
I hope I shall have leisure to make good ;
If this be not a dream I see and hear.

Ang. That is the chain, sir, which you had
of me.

Ant. S. I think it be, sir ; I deny it not.

Ant. E. And you, sir, for this chain arrested
me.

380

Ang. I think I did, sir ; I deny it not.

Adr. I sent you money, sir, to be your bail,
By Dromio ; but I think he brought it not.

Dro. E. No, none by me.

Ant. S. This purse of ducats I received from
you

And Dromio my man did bring them me.
I see we still did meet each other's man,
And I was ta'en for him, and he for me,
And thereupon these ERRORS are arose.

Ant. E. These ducats pawn I for my father
here.

Duke. It shall not need ; thy father hath his
life.

390

Cour. Sir, I must have that diamond from you.

Ant. E. There, take it ; and much thanks for
my good cheer.

Abb. Renowned duke, vouchsafe to take the
pains

To go with us into the abbey here,
And hear at large discoursed all our fortunes :
And all that are assembled in this place,
That by this sympathized one day's error

397. *this sympathized one day's error*, the error in which all
have shared.

Have suffer'd wrong, go keep us company,
And we shall make full satisfaction.

Thirty-three years have I but gone in travail 400
Of you my sons ; and till this present hour
My heavy burthen ne'er delivered.
The duke, my husband and my children both,
And you the calendars of their nativity,
Go to a gossips' feast, and go with me ;
After so long grief, such festivity !

Duke. With all my heart, I'll gossip at this
feast. *[Exeunt all but Ant. S., Ant. E.,
Dro. S., and Dro. E.]*

Dro. S. Master, shall I fetch your stuff from
shipboard ?

Ant. E. Dromio, what stuff of mine hast thou
embark'd ?

Dro. S. Your goods that lay at host, sir, in
the Centaur. 410

Ant. S. He speaks to me. I am your master,
Dromio :

Come, go with us ; we'll look to that anon :
Embrace thy brother there ; rejoice with him.

[Exeunt Ant. S. and Ant. E.]

Dro. S. There is a fat friend at your master's
house,

That kitchen'd me for you to-day at dinner :
She now shall be my sister, not my wife.

Dro. E. Methinks you are my glass, and not
my brother :

I see by you I am a sweet-faced youth.

400. *Thirty-three.* Theobald proposed, and many editors read, 'twenty-five,' on arithmetical grounds ; eighteen years having passed between the wreck and the separation from Ant. Syr. (i. 1. 126), seven between that

date and the present (v. 1. 320).

404. *calendars* ; cf. note, i. 2. 4.

405. *gossips' feast*, a sponsors', or baptismal, feast.

415. *kitchen'd*, entertained in the kitchen.

The Comedy of Errors

ACT V

Will you walk in to see their gossiping?

Dro. S. Not I, sir; you are my elder.

420

Dro. E. That's a question: how shall we try it?

Dro. S. We'll draw cuts for the senior: till then lead thou first.

Dro. E. Nay, then, thus:

We came into the world like brother and brother;
And now let's go hand in hand, not one before
another. *[Exeunt.]*

The Comedies
of English
Language
K. P. 1
Aug 12

